

# INDIAN STATUTORY COMMISSION.

## LIST OF VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.—REPORT (SURVEY).

VOLUME II.—REPORT (RECOMMENDATIONS).

VOLUME III.—Reports of the Committees appointed by the Provincial Legislative Councils to co-operate with the Commission.

IV.—Memoranda submitted by the Government of India and the India Office. (Part I.)

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IX.—Do. do. United Provinces.

X.—Do. do. Punjab.

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XIV.—Do. do. Assam.

XV.—Extracts from official oral Evidence.

XVI.—Selections from memoranda and oral Evidence by non-officials (Part I).

XVII.—Do. (Part II).

*See also*

(1) Report of the Indian Central Committee issued as Command Paper No. 3451 of 1929; and  
Supplementary Note by Dr. A. Suhrawardy, M.L.A. issued as Command Paper No. 3525 of 1930.

(2) Review of Growth of Education in British India by the Auxiliary Committee appointed by the Commission issued with Interim Report by the Commission as Command Paper No. 3407 of 1929.

is bound to be slow, and the obvious fact that India is not, in the ordinary and natural sense, a single nation is nowhere made more plain than in considering the difference between the martial races of India and the rest. It seems certain that in the future equal efficiency in the military sense, such as is necessary in view of the severe tasks which the Army in India has to perform, and in view of the urgent need of reduced military expenditure, cannot be expected from all sections of the population of India. As things are, the presence of British troops and the leadership of British officers secure that the fighting regiments of India, though representing only a portion of India's manhood, shall not be a menace to the millions who are conducting their civil occupations without any thought of the consequences which might ensue if British troops were withdrawn and the Indian Army consisted of nothing but representatives of the Indian fighting races. It is manifest that the peaceful unity of a self-governing India would be exposed to great risks if it relied, for the purpose of maintaining and restoring internal order, solely upon Indian troops drawn from selected areas and special races, such as the Punjabi, the Pathan, the Sikh, the Mahratta, or (to go outside India) the Gurkha. Indian statesmen, in developing their ideas of self-government for India as a whole, will, as it seems to us, have to face these questions in a practical spirit, with a full realisation of their complexity, for generalisations about self-government are no substitute for a frank examination of the special difficulties of the Indian case in relation to the defence problem.

#### Army Questions in Nehru Report.

117. The latest attempt, from the side of Indian nationalism, to deal with the question of the Army in relation to the development of Indian self-government is to be found in the "Report of the Committee appointed by the All-Parties Conference, 1928, to determine the principles of the constitution for India," which is commonly called the "Nehru Report." Strictly speaking, the short passage dealing with the subject is not to be found in the Report itself, nor in the sketch of recommendations in Chapter VII of the document. The matter is touched upon, however, in the introduction, which states that the authors recommend the transfer of control over the Indian Army to Ministers. The authors of the Report quote Professor Keith's pungent observation, "Self-Government without an effective Indian Army is an impossibility, and no amount of protests or demonstrations or denunciations of the Imperial Government can avail to alter that fact," and they add:—

"This is true, but we do not accept the constitutional position that without an Indian or Dominion Army India cannot obtain Dominion status. In the first place the Indian Army has not to be created; it exists there already. In the next place historically the position taken by our critics is not correct."

The historical reference is supposed to be supported by a quotation from the speech made in the Legislative Assembly on 18th February, 1924, by Sir Sivaswami Iyer, who then observed that "as far as my reading of colonial history goes, none of the colonies was in a position to assume its defence at the time when a self-governing status was granted to it."

This quotation, and the reliance placed on it by the authors of the Nehru Report, seem to suggest that the real nature of the difference between India's military problem and that of the self-governing Dominions, which we have tried to set out in the preceding paragraphs, has not been fully apprehended. The difference largely depends upon understanding what is the urgency of the risks in the two cases. It may be true that when a particular Colony has acquired self-government it could not have defended itself against an onslaught from well-armed invaders, but the point is that the other Dominions are so placed and circumstanced that the practical risk did not exist. The test in each case is the ability to meet not imaginary or far-fetched risks, but real ones. A man does not need to insure against earthquakes in regions where it is practically inconceivable that earthquakes should occur. And the question is not whether, in the early days of self-government, Canada could have withstood an invasion such as might pour through the Khyber into the plains of India, but whether she could handle any sudden risks reasonably incident to her own frontiers. In point of fact the Colony of Natal was unable to secure an earlier attainment of self-government because the Zulus and Boers on her borders were a menace too constant and too formidable for Natal to deal with, if the British forces were withdrawn. The difficulties of the Indian military situation simply do not exist elsewhere in the Empire, and it is therefore no use claiming that the absence of such difficulties elsewhere proves that India can proceed, smoothly and rapidly, to complete self-government by ignoring the formidable obstacle in her path.

It is equally fallacious to suggest that India can attain complete self-government because it already has an Indian Army which is sufficient to defend it. By "Indian Army" is presumably meant the Indian regiments, which form only a portion of the Army in India, and which are not the forces whose use is preferred when communal feeling needs to be restrained. But even the Indian regiments are as yet officered almost entirely by British officers, so unless the authors of the Nehru Report contemplate that a self-governing India will, in the normal course, have at its service, and under the direction of its Minister for War, large numbers of British officers holding the King's commission, it is apparent that a good deal has to be done before the question of defence, in relation to Indian constitutional progress, can be said to be solved.



# INDIAN STATUTORY COMMISSION

## VOLUME I

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Report

*of the*

# Indian Statutory Commission

## Volume 1—Survey



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Report of the Royal Commission on the Superior Civil Services in India.	Lee Commission Report ...	2128 of 1924.
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## NOTE.

At the present par value of the rupee (1/6d.), one crore of rupees (equal to 100 lakhs of rupees) is equivalent to £750,000.

## ROYAL WARRANT.

*GEORGE R.I.*

GEORGE THE FIFTH, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India, to

Our Right Trusty and Well-Beloved Counsellor Sir John Allsebrook Simon, Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, Officer of Our Most Excellent Order of the British Empire;

Our Right Trusty and Well-Beloved Cousin Harry Lawson Webster, Viscount Burnham, Knight Grand Cross of Our Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Member of the Order of the Companions of Honour, upon whom We have conferred the Territorial Decoration;

Our Right Trusty and Well-Beloved Donald Sterling Palmer, Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal;

Our Trusty and Well-Beloved Edward Cecil George Cadogan, Esquire (commonly called the Honourable Edward Cecil George Cadogan), Companion of Our Most Honourable Order of the Bath;

Our Right Trusty and Well-Beloved Counsellor Stephen Walsh;

Our Right Trusty and Well-Beloved Counsellor George Richard Lane Fox, Honorary Colonel, the Yorkshire Hussars Yeomanry, upon whom We have conferred the Territorial Decoration;

Our Trusty and Well-Beloved Clement Richard Attlee, Esquire, Major, late South Lancashire Regiment;

Greeting!

WHEREAS We have deemed it expedient that the Commission for which provision is made in Section 84A of the Government of India Act should forthwith be appointed for the purpose of inquiring into the working of the system of government, the growth of education, and the development of representative institutions, in British India, and matters connected therewith, and should report as to whether and to what extent it is desirable to establish the principle of responsible government, or to extend, modify, or restrict the degree of responsible government then existing therein, including the question whether the establishment of second chambers of the local legislatures is or is not desirable:

Now KNOW YE that We, reposing great trust and confidence in your knowledge and ability, have on the advice of Our Secretary of State for India acting with the concurrence of both Houses of Parliament authorised and appointed, and do by these

Presents authorise and appoint you, the said Sir John Allsebrook Simon (Chairman); Harry Lawson Webster, Viscount Burnham; Donald Sterling Palmer, Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal; Edward Cecil George Cadogan; Stephen Walsh; George Richard Lane Fox and Clement Richard Attlee to be Our Commissioners for the purposes aforesaid :

AND for the better effecting of the purposes of this Our Commission, We do by these Presents give and grant unto you, or any three or more of you, full power at any place in Our United Kingdom or in India or elsewhere in Our Dominions to call before you such persons as you shall judge likely to afford you any information upon the subject of this Our Commission : and also whether in Our said Kingdom, or in India, or elsewhere in Our Dominions to call for information in writing ; to call for, have access to and examine all such books, documents, registers and records as may afford you the fullest information on the subject, and to inquire of and concerning the premises by all other lawful ways and means whatsoever, including the appointment by the Commission with the sanction of Our Secretary of State for India, of any person or persons to make subordinate enquiries and to report the result to the Commission :

AND We do by these Presents authorise and empower you or any of you to visit and inspect personally such places as you may deem it expedient so to inspect for the more effectual carrying out of the purposes aforesaid :

AND We do by these Presents will and ordain that this Our Commission shall continue in full force and virtue, and that you, Our said Commissioners, or any three or more of you, may from time to time proceed in the execution thereof, and of every matter and thing therein contained, although the same be not continued from time to time by adjournment :

AND We do further ordain that you, or any three or more of you, have liberty to report your proceedings under this Our Commission from time to time if you shall judge it expedient so to do :

AND Our further will and pleasure is that you do, with as little delay as possible, report to Us under your hands and seals, or under the hands and seals of any three or more of you, your opinion upon the matters herein submitted for your consideration :

GIVEN at Our Court at *Saint James's* the *Twenty-sixth* day of *November*, One thousand nine hundred and twenty-seven ; in the Eighteenth Year of Our Reign.

By His Majesty's Command.  
*W. Joynson-Hicks.*

GEORGE, R.I.

GEORGE THE FIFTH, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain.  
Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas King.  
Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India, to

Our Right Trusty and Well-Beloved Counsellor Vernon  
Hartshorn, Officer of Our Most Excellent Order of the British  
Empire,

Greeting !

WHEREAS We did by Warrant under Our Royal Sign Manual bearing date the Twenty-sixth day of November, One thousand nine hundred and twenty-seven, appoint Commissioners for the purpose of inquiring into the working of the system of government, the growth of education, and the development of representative institutions, in British India, and matters connected therewith, and of reporting as to whether and to what extent it is desirable to establish the principle of responsible government, or to extend, modify, or restrict the degree of responsible government then existing therein, including the question whether the establishment of second chambers of the local legislatures is or is not desirable ;

AND WHEREAS a vacancy has been caused in the body of Commissioners appointed as aforesaid, by the resignation of Our Right Trusty and Well-Beloved Counsellor Stephen Walsh ;

NOW KNOW YE that We reposing great confidence in your knowledge and ability have on the advice of Our Secretary of State for India acting with the concurrence of both Houses of Parliament authorised and appointed and do by these Presents authorise and appoint you the said Vernon Hartshorn to be one of Our Commissioners for the purposes aforesaid, in the room of the said Stephen Walsh, who has resigned.

GIVEN at Our Court at Sandringham ; the *Seventh* day of  
*December*, One thousand nine hundred and twenty-  
seven ; in the Eighteenth year of Our Reign.

By His Majesty's Command.

*W. Joynson-Hicks*

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NOTE.—The late Mr. Stephen Walsh's resignation, on account of ill-health, took place before any meeting of the Commission had been held.

## INDIAN STATUTORY COMMISSION. REPORT.

To  
THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

May it Please Your Majesty,

We, the Commissioners appointed for the purpose of inquiring into the working of the system of government, the growth of education, and the development of representative institutions in British India, and matters connected therewith, and of reporting as to whether and to what extent it is desirable to establish the principle of responsible government, or to extend, modify, or restrict the degree of responsible government existing therein, including the question whether the establishment of second chambers of the local legislatures is or is not desirable; humbly submit to Your Majesty the following Report.

Our Report is unanimous on all fundamental matters, and will be found to be without dissenting minute.

It is, as is more fully explained on pages 5-9 below, divided into two volumes.

Section 84A of the Government of India Act prescribes that :—

(1) Within\* ten years after the passing of the Government of India Act, 1919, the Secretary of State with the concurrence of both Houses of Parliament shall submit for the approval of His Majesty the names of persons to act as a commission for the purposes of this section.

(2) The persons whose names are so submitted, if approved by His Majesty, shall be a commission for the purpose of inquiring into the working of the system of government, the growth of education, and the development of representative institutions, in British India, and matters connected therewith, and the commission shall report as to whether and to what extent it is desirable to establish the principle of responsible government, or to extend, modify, or restrict the degree of responsible government then existing therein, including the question whether the establishment of second chambers of the local legislatures is or is not desirable.

(3) The commission shall also inquire into and report on any other matter affecting British India and the provinces, which may be referred to the commission by His Majesty.

It is in pursuance of this section of the Statute that we were appointed, and our terms of reference, set forth in the Royal Warrant, follow the provisions of its second subsection.

Your Majesty's Government, in announcing the decision that the Statutory Commission should be appointed, made the following statements :—

† His Majesty's Government cannot of course dictate to the Commission what procedure it shall follow, but they are of opinion that its task in taking evidence would be greatly facilitated if it were to invite the Central Legislature to appoint a Joint Select Committee chosen from its elected and nominated unofficial members which would draw up its views and proposals in writing and lay them before the Commission for examination in such

\* The word "Within" was substituted for "At the expiration of" by the Government of India (Statutory Commission) Act, 1927.

† See Cmd. 2986 of 1927.

manner as the latter may decide. This Committee might remain in being for any consultation which the Commission might desire at subsequent stages of the enquiry. It should be clearly understood that the purpose of this suggestion is not to limit the discretion of the Commission in hearing other witnesses.

His Majesty's Government suggest that a similar procedure should be adopted with the provincial legislatures.

\* \* \* \*

When the Commission has reported and its report has been examined by the Government of India and His Majesty's Government it will be the duty of the latter to present proposals to Parliament. But it is not the intention of His Majesty's Government to ask Parliament to adopt these proposals without first giving a full opportunity for Indian opinion of different schools to contribute its view upon them. And to this end it is intended to invite Parliament to refer these proposals to consideration by a Joint Committee of both Houses and to facilitate the presentation to that Committee both of the views of the Indian Central Legislature by delegations who will be invited to attend and confer with the Joint Committee and also of the views of any other bodies whom the Joint Parliamentary Committee may desire to consult.

We paid two visits to India, the first lasting from 3rd February, 1928, to 31st March, 1928, and the second from 11th October, 1928, to 13th April, 1929.

Our first task, on arrival in India, was to formulate our procedure, in the light of the suggestions of Your Majesty's Government quoted above. In a letter from our Chairman to His Excellency the Viceroy, dated 6th February, 1928, which we reproduce, we proposed the method of "Joint Free Conference."

Your Excellency,

In your speech to the Central Legislature on Thursday you laid renewed emphasis on the 'full discretion as to methods' which has from the beginning been left in the hands of the Indian Statutory Commission; and I myself, as Chairman, on landing in India next day, authorised the issue of a statement on behalf of the Commission, that it hoped without delay to announce the line of procedure which it would propose to follow. Evidence accumulates that throughout India there is much uncertainty as to the manner in which we may be expected to exercise our functions, and even considerable misunderstanding as to what we conceive those functions to be; while—amidst many messages of welcome and encouragement—we note that speeches are being made and resolutions passed which are based on a complete, though doubtless genuine, misconception of our intentions. It is my plain duty, therefore, as Chairman to set out forthwith the true position as we regard it, and, since on this preliminary visit there is not likely to be any formal sitting of the Commission when the statement could be made, I venture to address this letter to your Excellency.

We understand that the Government of India and the Local Governments have been engaged for some time past in preparing the material which they might put before the Commission. We have not seen these documents and do not know how far they may consist of matters of fact and how far of matters of opinion, or whether they deal with past events or with suggestions for the future. But whatever they are, instead of dealing with them by ourselves, we wish to propose that they, and the evidence given in explanation or amplification of them, should come before a 'Joint Free Conference', over which I should preside, consisting of the seven British Commissioners and a corresponding body of representatives chosen by the Indian Legislatures (just as we ourselves have been chosen by the British Parliament).



We put forward the plan of a 'Joint Free Conference' not only because we should welcome the assistance of colleagues from the Indian Legislatures, but because we think it is only right and fair, and in the truest interests of India and Britain alike, that opportunity should be provided for such memoranda and testimony to be scrutinized and, if necessary, elucidated from the Indian side on free and equal terms. We suggest therefore that the two Houses of the Central Legislature should in due course be invited to choose from their non-official members a Joint Committee, which might conveniently be seven in number, and that each Local Legislative Council should be asked to constitute a similar body. The Indian side of the Conference would consist, when Central subjects were being dealt with, of those first named; in a Province, the Indian wing would primarily consist of the Provincial members, but, in order that the Central Joint Committee may not have a partial view of the material put before it, we should be glad if arrangements could be arrived at which would enable its members, or some of them, to be present as an additional element at provincial sittings.

We have no wish to dictate the composition of the Indian wing of the Conference in more detail, and we should greatly prefer that the precise scheme should be reached by agreement between the different elements in India concerned. Our main object will be met so long as the arrangement is one which secures that the Indian side of the Joint Conference includes, on appropriate occasions, those who are able to speak for the Provincial Councils just as the Joint Committee would speak for the Central Legislature, and so long as the members representing India sitting with us do not amount to an unwieldy number. We assume of course that, just as we ourselves are a body selected from all British parties and both Houses of Parliament, so our Indian counterpart would be, so far as may be, truly representative.

Two matters remain to be dealt with—the question of evidence other than that above referred to, and the question of Report. I wish to deal candidly and clearly with both.

Some of us have had considerable experience of the method of Joint Conference as applied both to industrial and political questions, and it is quite clear to us that each side of the Conference will require, from time to time, to meet by itself. We see no reason, however, why evidence from public and representative bodies, and from individuals, should not normally be given to the Conference as a whole, just as evidence presented by or on behalf of the various Governments would be. If a case arises when this general plan cannot be followed, I should make no secret of it, and should ask my colleagues in the Joint Free Conference, when, as I hope, they learn to have faith in my sense of fairness, to accept from me such account of the matter as I can give them on behalf of the Commission, with due regard to the reason why the testimony has been separately received. I imagine that the Indian side may find occasions when they would think it well to act in the same way.

As regards the Report, it is, I feel, necessary to restate the true function of the Commission and its place in the general scheme which you announced last November. The Commission is in no sense an instrument either of the Government of India or of the British Government, but enters on the duty laid upon it by the King Emperor as a completely independent and unfettered body composed of Members of Parliament who approach Indian Legislators as colleagues. It is not an executive or legislating body, authorised to pronounce decisions about the future government of India. Before these decisions can be reached, the full process, of which the present investigation is a first step, must be completed, including the opportunity for the views of the Indian Legislature, amongst other bodies, being presented by delegations in London to the Joint Parliamentary Committee. The present Commission is only authorised to report and make recommendations, and in this Report we desire to include a faithful account of the opinions and aspirations prevalent in India, and of the concrete proposals for constitu-

tional reform so far as these are put before us. The British Commissioners, therefore, are bound to be solely responsible for the statement of the effect upon their own minds of the investigation as a whole. We shall report to the authority by which we have been constituted just as (if the Conference is set up) the Joint Committee would, we presume, be entitled to report its conclusions to the Central Legislature. It is obvious that those documents should be prepared and presented simultaneously. There are well known constitutional means by which the document emanating from the Joint Committee and presented to the Central Legislature can be forwarded to and made available for the British Parliament. But, if the Indian Joint Committee would prefer it, we would make its Report an annexe to our own document, so that both might be presented to the King Emperor, and made public, at the same moment.

Above all, I would urge that one of the merits of the method of Joint Conference is that, besides securing due recognition of equal status, it provides the opportunity for that free exchange of views and mutual influence which are best calculated to promote the largest measure of agreement that is possible.

Our present visit is preliminary and the sittings of the Joint Free Conference, if it is set up, would not begin till October. But we make public our suggestions at once, not only in order to clear the air, but in order to show ourselves available for any conference about any matters of procedure which this statement does not adequately cover.

The Commission is, of course, bound to carry through its task in any event and discharge to the full the duty cast upon it, but we are undertaking this duty only after having made it known that the method of collaboration on honourable and equal terms is open, and that we put it forward in all sincerity and good will. We will only add that in making these proposals we are confident that we are correctly interpreting the intentions of the British Parliament.

The carrying out of our proposals will require, at a later date, that the Council of State, the Legislative Assembly, and the Local Legislative Councils should be moved to elect their representatives who would take part in the Joint Conference, and the Commission will be glad if the Government of India will take such steps as seem appropriate for this purpose in due course.

I have the honour to be,  
Your Excellency's obedient servant,  
(Sd.) JOHN SIMON.

It will be seen that Joint Conferences were not to begin till our second visit.

Although we received numerous deputations which laid their views before us, we took no evidence on our first visit, which was mainly devoted to attempting to master the elements of the situation, and to visiting more of the country districts (particularly in the Madras Presidency and the Punjab) than was possible on the second visit. We travelled in India about 7,000 miles on this preliminary visit.

Before leaving India on the first occasion, we invited the submission of memoranda, both from official and non-official sources, on questions falling within the scope of our enquiry. The Governments, both Central and Provincial, had of course already been engaged on the preparation of material. We received from the Government of India (and also from officials of the India Office) descriptive and explanatory memoranda which are published in Volumes IV and V supplementary to our

Report. Each Provincial Government supplied us with elaborate memoranda, both expository and critical, on the working of the reformed constitution; and also (except in the case of the Government of the Central Provinces) furnished us, at our request, with their suggestions as regards future developments. The material so provided by the nine Provincial Governments will be found in Supplementary Volumes VI to XIV. We also received large numbers of memoranda from non-officials, both representative associations and individuals. A selection of the more important of these is contained in Supplementary Volumes XVI and XVII.

Before we arrived in India for our second visit, all the Provincial Legislatures, except those of Burma and the Central Provinces, had appointed Committees to collaborate with us in Joint Conference as we had proposed. The Burma Legislative Council appointed a Committee in December, 1928. No Committee was appointed by the Central Provinces Legislature.

The Council of State elected three members of its body in pursuance of the invitation in our letter of 6th February, 1928. The Legislative Assembly had by a small majority decided not to co-operate with the Commission. Shortly before our second arrival, the Viceroy appointed an Indian Central Committee consisting of these three members and another member of the Council of State, and five members of the Legislative Assembly, to work with us.

The Indian Central Committee received the whole of the written material which was supplied to us, and each Provincial Committee was furnished with all the documents relating to its own province and also with any of a general nature which were directly relevant to provincial questions in every province alike.

The Punjab Committee, which was the first appointed, had represented that it would be difficult for them to discharge their task if—as was suggested in the letter of 6th February might occasionally happen—any evidence was given to the Statutory Commission alone. The Commission accepted the force of this contention, and the following procedure was adopted in each Governor's Province. All evidence was taken by the Joint Conference, composed of the Statutory Commission, the Indian Central Committee and the Provincial Committee† sitting together, every member of which shared in the work of examining witnesses. Evidence was taken by the Conference, in the presence of the press, both from officials in explanation or expansion of the material supplied by their Government, and also from those associations, representative bodies, and private individuals, whom the Conference invited to supplement,

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† As explained, the Joint Conference, when sitting in the Central Provinces, did not include any Provincial Committee.

in this manner, the views which they had already expressed to the Commission in writing.

The Joint Conference also had the great advantage in all provinces of having interviews with the Members and Ministers of the provincial Government, who were good enough to develop for the benefit of the Conference, in amplification of the written suggestions of the Government, their own personal views as regards constitutional changes.

Evidence was taken in the North-West Frontier Province by a Joint Conference of the Commission and the Indian Central Committee, assisted by four distinguished Indians resident in the Province whom the Commission had invited to sit with them.

Non-official evidence from associations of an All-India character was taken at whatever centre was the most convenient, usually either at Delhi or Calcutta.

At Delhi, where Central matters were under consideration, the Joint Conference consisted of the Commission and the Indian Central Committee. Evidence was taken from officials of the Government of India by way of supplement to the descriptive material supplied.

Members of the Governor-General's Executive Council were good enough to express to the Joint Conference their own personal views on some of the aspects of constitutional reform.

Shortly before we left India, a final conference was held for 3 days at Delhi of all the eight Provincial Committees, the Indian Central Committee and the Statutory Commission sitting together.

Between our arrival in India on our second visit and our departure, we travelled about 14,000 miles. Evidence was taken, on 75 days in all, at the following places :—Poona, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Delhi, Lucknow, Patna, Shillong, Calcutta, Rangoon, Mandalay, Madras and Nagpur. We have also visited many other areas besides these principal towns and have done our utmost to make ourselves more familiar with various parts of British India. We cannot refrain here from recording an expression of our gratitude for the overwhelmingly generous hospitality which we received both from Indians and Europeans throughout our stay in India.

On our return to England further sittings of the Joint Conference were held, after the general election, between 19th June and 30th July, 1929. The Indian Central Committee had come to this country for the purpose. The Conference heard, *inter alia*, the personal views of some officials of the India Office and Members of the Secretary of State's Council. It also took evidence from the High Commissioner for India and from a representative of the War Office.

Extracts from the more important portions of evidence given in the presence of the press are contained in Supplementary Volumes XV, XVI and XVII.\*

The Report of the Indian Central Committee has already been presented to Parliament (Cmd. 3451 of 1929). The Reports of the Provincial Committees have been made public in India. They are collected in Volume III, which will, it is understood, be presented to Parliament simultaneously with our Report.

The collaboration of the Indian Committees, both Central and Provincial, has been of very great assistance to us in the discharge of our own task. Quite apart from the great value of now having their recommendations embodied in their separate reports, we secured, by their cooperation in the examination of material and in the taking of evidence, a testing of its value of the most thorough kind, and illumination on the matters under consideration from many angles.

We have also derived very great advantage from the Review of the Auxiliary Committee on Education which we appointed, under the powers conferred on us in the Royal Warrant, to enquire into the growth of Education in British India (see page 378 below). This report has already been presented to Parliament, under cover of an Interim Report by the Commission, as Cmd. 3407 of 1929.

As our enquiry drew to a close we were increasingly impressed by the impossibility of considering the constitutional problems of British India without taking into account the relations between British India and the Indian States. Before proceeding with the task of formulating our conclusions, we accordingly ascertained that Your Majesty's Government would approve if we gave a possibly extended interpretation to our terms of reference by not excluding this aspect from our purview.

At the same time we suggested that the procedure to be followed after our Report had been published (which had been outlined in the announcement by Your Majesty's Government in 1927 quoted above) should be revised and a Conference set up.

Our suggestions and the Government's acceptance of them, are set out in the following letters exchanged between the Prime Minister and our Chairman.

16th October, 1929.

My dear Prime Minister,

The Indian Statutory Commission has now entered upon the final stages of its work and hopes to be able to present its Report early next year. Before proceeding further however, we desire to address you with an enquiry and a suggestion.

As our investigation has proceeded, we have become more and more impressed, in considering the direction which the future constitutional

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\* We have suggested that a copy of the remainder of such evidence and of the non-official memoranda not printed in Vols. XVI and XVII should be made available for inspection in London and in India, and we understand that this will be done.

development of India is likely to take, with the importance of bearing in mind the relations which may develop between British India and the Indian States. We are not at present in the position to forecast the Report which we shall hope in due course to present to Parliament. It is, however, already evident to us that, whatever may be the scheme which Parliament will ultimately approve for the future constitution and governance of British India, it is essential that the methods by which the future relationship between these two constituent parts of Greater India may be adjusted, should be fully examined.

We have carefully considered the Report of the Butler Committee\* but the terms of reference to that body did not cover the whole ground to be surveyed so far as these relations are concerned. Our own recommendations, if we were to exclude from our purview the wider problem which we have indicated, would, we feel, be unduly restricted, and we therefore wish, before going further, to ascertain whether we should have the approval of His Majesty's Government in giving this possibly extended interpretation to our own terms of reference. It is not our purpose to seek to explore the field already traversed by the Butler Committee; but it seems clear that we cannot afford to ignore the reactions of the presence of the States on the problem we are studying in British India, or the possible repercussions on the former of any recommendations we might frame regarding the latter. At certain points an inevitable contact takes place.

We venture to point out that if the Report we are preparing and the proposals to be subsequently framed by the Government take this wider range it would appear necessary, because of the need of consulting the States, for the Government to revise the scheme of procedure to be followed after these proposals are made known. It seems to us that what would be required would be the setting up of some sort of conference after the Reports of the Statutory Commission and the Indian Central Committee have been made, considered and published and their work has been completed, and that in this conference His Majesty's Government would meet both representatives of British India and representatives of the States (not necessarily always together) for the purpose of seeking the greatest possible measure of agreement for the final proposals which it would later be the duty of His Majesty's Government to submit to Parliament. The procedure by Joint Parliamentary Committee conferring with delegations from the Indian Legislature and other bodies, which was previously contemplated and is referred to in my letter to the Viceroy of February 6th, 1928, would still be appropriate for the examination of the Bill when it is subsequently placed before Parliament, but would, we think, obviously have to be preceded by some such conference as we have indicated.

We realise that it is not for the Statutory Commission to devise this subsequent procedure in detail, for our task will be discharged when we have reported. But we feel that it is desirable to obtain an assurance from His Majesty's Government that we shall not in their view be travelling beyond the terms of reference approved by Parliament if we pursue what seems to us an integral element in our investigation. We have also thought it right to make plain to His Majesty's Government the consequence that such an assurance from His Majesty's Government is likely ultimately to involve, in order that the future course of procedure may be so shaped as to provide means for consulting with the Indian States and to promote the full co-operation of all parties and interests in the solution of the Indian problem as a whole.

Yours very sincerely,

(Sd.) JOHN SIMON.

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\* See page 83.

25th October, 1929.

My dear Simon,

Your letter on behalf of the Statutory Commission raises issues of such importance that I have thought right before answering it to consult the leaders of other Parties. I have now been able to ascertain their views, and they have been good enough to concur in the terms of my reply.

His Majesty's Government welcome the intimation that your letter affords of the Statutory Commission's desire to deal in its report with the wider aspects of the subject to which your letter directs attention. It appears to His Majesty's Government, as it does to those on behalf of whom you write, that your work would necessarily be rendered more complete if it included a careful examination of the methods by which the future relationship of British India and the Indian States may be adjusted.

His Majesty's Government have given full consideration to what you have said in your letter concerning the consequential necessity of some revision of the later procedure as at present contemplated, and I am glad to be able to inform you that they concur in the view that you have expressed. His Majesty's Government are, with you, deeply sensible of the importance of thus bringing the whole problem under comprehensive review; and that under conditions which may promise to secure as great a degree of unanimity as may be practicable. His Majesty's Government are also greatly concerned to find means by which they may approach the treatment of the broad question of British-Indian constitutional advance in co-operation with all those who can authoritatively speak for British-Indian political opinion. It seems to them that both these objects can best be achieved by the adoption of procedure that will permit the free representation of all points of view in advance of the stage at which His Majesty's Government will lay any proposals before Parliament, which may be expected later, as you point out, to form the subject of examination by a Joint Parliamentary Committee. When, therefore, your Commission has submitted its Report and His Majesty's Government have been able, in consultation with the Government of India, to consider these matters in the light of all the material then available, they will propose to invite representatives of different parties and interests in British India and representatives of the Indian States to meet them, separately or together, as circumstances may demand, for the purpose of conference and discussion in regard both to the British-Indian and All-Indian problems.

It will be their earnest hope that by this means it may subsequently prove possible on these grave issues to submit definite proposals to Parliament which may command a wide measure of general assent.

With my best wishes for the success of your further labours.

Yours very sincerely,

(Sd.) J. RAMSAY MACDONALD.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.**

We especially wish to put on record our debt to the Secretariat of the Commission. Mr. J. W. Bhore,\* C.I.E., C.B.E., I.C.S., and Mr. S. F. Stewart, C.S.I., C.I.E., have acted jointly as our principal Secretaries, and Mr. R. H. A. Carter and Mr. E. W. Perry, I.C.S., as principal Assistant Secretaries. Throughout all the stages of our enquiry and in preparing the Report itself, their knowledge and experience have been invaluable. In the course of an investigation which has extended over two-and-a-half years, and which has involved the examination of an enormous range of documents and the analysis of nearly a hundred days of evidence, these gentlemen have rendered ungrudging service of the highest quality, without which it would have been quite impossible for the task to be thus completed. We also wish specially to mention the untiring aid rendered by Mr. R. J. Stopford of our Secretarial staff.

We have already referred to the valued help which we received from our Auxiliary Committee on Education. We desire to express our grateful acknowledgments to its Chairman, Sir Philip Hartog, C.I.E., and his colleagues.

Mr. W. T. Layton, C.H., C.B.E., with much public spirit, responded to the Commission's appeal to assist one part of its work by accompanying it to India and acting as Financial Assessor. We are greatly indebted to him for his guidance, and, as will appear in our second volume, our recommendations on the financial side owe much to the elaborate report which he has prepared for us. Associated more particularly with this compartment of our Report is the valuable service rendered by Mr. B. Rama Rau, I.C.S., who was attached to the Commission for financial duties.

Had it been possible, we should have liked to mention by name more of the staff of helpers in India and in England who have so cheerfully and efficiently carried through their share of the work. A complete list is impossible, and selection would be invidious, where all have done so well. But we should not like to omit from special mention the name of Mr. A. J. Parker, the head of our shorthand staff.

We now pass to the first volume of our Report, which will be followed shortly by the second volume which will contain our recommendations.

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\* Mr. Bhore had to give up his appointment in February, 1930, on his selection to be a member of the Council of the Governor-General.





## INTRODUCTION.

1. Twelve years ago, in April, 1918, the Montagu-Chelmsford Report was signed. Its joint authors, in the first chapter of that document, declared that the announcement made by Mr. Montagu on 20th August, 1917, to the House of Commons was "the most momentous utterance ever made in India's chequered history." This claim is justified. As the situation is reviewed after that interval it is manifest that this pronouncement supplies the governing conditions to be observed and satisfied by any and every scheme for India's future constitutional progress. Every circumstance was present which could add weight and authority to the declaration. Its terms were settled by a Coalition Cabinet—it is interesting to note that it was Lord Curzon's pen which inserted in the formula the reference to "responsible government."\* The British Parliament accepted the statement as made not merely by the particular Administration then in office, but as a pledge and assurance offered to India by Britain herself. No challenge was issued by any Party in the State. After Mr. Montagu had returned from India with the Report drawn up by himself and the then Viceroy, indicating how the first step in implementing this declaration should be taken, the Government of India Bill of 1919 was introduced, and was passed by both Houses of Parliament without a division being challenged at any cardinal stage. The Joint Select Committee of both Houses appointed to consider the Bill (after it had been read a second time in the House of Commons by general consent) reported that the plan proposed by the Bill interpreted the pronouncement of 20th August, 1917, with scrupulous accuracy. Among the changes which the Joint Committee recommended in the language of the Bill as first presented was an enlargement of the Preamble so as to reproduce as fully as possible the features of Mr. Montagu's declaration.

When the new Constitution was inaugurated, the Duke of Connaught, in the name of the King-Emperor, reaffirmed the policy of which the initial stage was then being taken, and successive Viceroys have reiterated the assurance. No responsible person has ever sought to repudiate the commitments thus entered into, and they have recently been reaffirmed and emphasised. We enter upon our task, therefore, upon the basis and assumption that the goal defined by Mr. Montagu represents the accepted policy to be pursued, and that the only proposals worthy to be considered are proposals conceived in the spirit of the announcement of 20th August, 1917, and inspired with the honest purpose of giving to it its due effect. It is in this spirit and with this purpose that we frame our

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\* *Life of Curzon (Ronaldshay)*, Vol. III, p. 167.

Report, and we can do no other, for we are appointed under a section of the very Act of Parliament which contains the Preamble.

### Mr. Montagu's Announcement.

2. The announcement made to the House of Commons on 20th August, 1917, by Mr. Montagu was in the following terms :—

"The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. They have decided that substantial steps in this direction should be taken as soon as possible, and that it is of the highest importance as a preliminary to considering what these steps should be that there should be a free and informal exchange of opinion between those in authority at home and in India. His Majesty's Government have accordingly decided, with His Majesty's approval, that I should accept the Viceroy's invitation to proceed to India to discuss these matters with the Viceroy and the Government of India, to consider with the Viceroy the views of local Governments, and to receive with him the suggestions of representative bodies and others.

"I would add that progress in this policy can only be achieved by successive stages. The British Government and the Government of India, on whom the responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples, must be judges of the time and measure of each advance, and they must be guided by the co-operation received from those upon whom new opportunities of service will thus be conferred and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility."

### The Preamble.

3. The Preamble to the Government of India Act, 1919, recapitulated this statement as follows :—

"Whereas it is the declared policy of Parliament to provide for the increasing association of Indians in every branch of Indian Administration, and for the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in British India as an integral part of the empire :

"And whereas progress in giving effect to this policy can only be achieved by successive stages, and it is expedient that substantial steps in this direction should now be taken :

"And whereas the time and manner of each advance can be determined only by Parliament, upon whom responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples :

“ And whereas the action of Parliament in such matters must be guided by the co-operation received from those on whom new opportunities of service will be conferred, and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility :

“ And whereas concurrently with the gradual development of self-governing institutions in the Provinces of India it is expedient to give to those Provinces in provincial matters the largest measure of independence of the Government of India, which is compatible with the due discharge by the latter of its own responsibilities.”

#### **The Instrument of Instructions.**

4. In consequence of the passing of the Government of India Act, 1919, the Instrument of Instructions from the King-Emperor to the Governor-General of India was revised. These revised Instructions were issued on 15th March, 1921, and were shortly afterwards made public for general information. Two of the paragraphs in this Instrument make direct reference to the contents of the Preamble as follows :—

“ VI. And inasmuch as the policy of Our Parliament is set forth in the Preamble to the said Government of India Act, 1919, We do hereby require Our said Governor-General to be vigilant that this policy is constantly furthered alike by his Government and by the local Governments of all Our presidencies and provinces.”

“ IX. For above all things it is Our will and pleasure that the plans laid by Our Parliament for the progressive realisation of responsible government in British India as an integral part of Our Empire may come to fruition, to the end that British India may attain its due place among Our Dominions. Therefore, We do charge Our said Governor-General by the means aforesaid and by all other means which may to him seem fit to guide the course of Our subjects in India whose governance We have committed to his charge so that subject on the one hand always to the determination of Our Parliament, and, on the other hand, to the co-operation of those on whom new opportunities of service have been conferred, progress towards such realisation may ever advance to the benefit of all Our subjects in India.”

#### **The prescribed goal and the prescribed method.**

5. These, then, are the conditions, deliberately avowed and unswervingly maintained, under which Parliament is about to enter upon a re-examination of the vast Indian problem. These conditions have a double aspect, and as there is a tendency for

some commentators to confine attention to the one point of view, while critics of a different school concentrate solely upon the other, we feel that it is of the highest importance at the outset to emphasise the fact that the Montagu declaration of 1917 and the Preamble of 1919 embody both.

On the one hand, "the progressive realisation of responsible government in British India as an integral part of the British Empire" is the fixed object to the attainment of which, in co-operation with the Indian peoples themselves, British policy stands pledged; the obstacles in the way (and we shall not fail to give a full and candid account of them) cannot be treated as defeating that object, or as affording a discharge from its pursuit. They are of so formidable a character that no opinion as to what should now be done is worth anything at all until they are duly appreciated; but whatever the obstacles, the object stands as the declared goal of British-Indian policy.

On the other hand, it is equally part and parcel of the pronouncements of 1917 and 1919 that progress in the attainment of this avowed object "can only be achieved by successive stages"; that "the time and manner of each advance can be determined only by Parliament, upon whom responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples"; and that in the development of this purpose, the decision as to the immediate future must largely depend upon a just estimate of the results and consequences of the steps already taken.

6. We are well aware that many Indian publicists look askance at the efforts of others to give an account of these matters, however straightforward and sympathetic that account may be. The purely British composition of our own body roused resentment in many quarters in India—resentment which we did everything in our power to allay, first by seeking the co-operation of Indian Committees (for whose aid we are deeply grateful) and later by suggesting the calling of a Representative Conference after this Report and the Report of the Indian Central Committee have been made and published. We have learned enough of India to recognise and to respect the acutely sensitive pride of her sons. But we trust that in the pages that follow, inspired as they are by a desire not only to discharge our statutory duty to Parliament but to serve the cause of India's political progress, our Indian fellow-subjects will recognise that candour and friendship are close allies, and will find an earnest of that goodwill towards India as a whole which, we are well assured, will govern all the impending discussions. Our own task is not to decide, but to report to the King-Emperor whose Commission we hold and to the Parliament of which we are members. In the steps that will follow before the decision is reached there will be full opportunity for the contribution of the views of every section of responsible and representative opinion in India.

**Arrangement of Report—Volume One.**

7. The plan of our Report is as follows. It is divided into two volumes, corresponding to the two parts into which our statutory task falls. We are directed, in the first place, to "enquire into the working of the system of government, the growth of education, and the development of representative institutions in British India, and matters connected therewith." Our first volume is occupied with this survey. But we are further required to report as to the future, and our second volume presents the conclusions and recommendations at which we have arrived.

The survey contained in our first volume is divided into seven parts. In Part I we deal with "**The Conditions of the Problem.**" The Montagu-Chelmsford Report contained a brilliantly written chapter with the same title, and to this we shall make frequent reference. But it is, we feel, necessary to provide for Parliament afresh, in a compendious form, a statement, as accurate and impartial as we can make it, of what India is—its vast size and varied population, its conglomeration of races and religions, its social divisions, its economic circumstances, and its growing political consciousness. We have added to this Part an account of the Indian States and of the Army in India; both of these subjects exercise so great an influence on the Indian problem as a whole, and are so vitally involved in its future treatment, that their importance must be firmly grasped before we deal with each in closer detail later on. Much of this description in Part I will be regarded by those who are intimate with India as elementary, but the elements are not everywhere appreciated and borne in mind. We have ourselves found that two visits, in the course of which we have travelled through every part of British India, together with the study of a vast amount of accumulated material and the opportunity of friendly contact with men and women drawn from every section of Indian society, have left us with a much clearer view of these elementary considerations than we can claim to have had before. We feel, therefore, that Parliament will expect us to set out these matters as a preliminary to the discussion of any constitutional question.

8. In Part II we set out our account of "**The Existing Constitutional Structure.**" Much (though not all) of this is to be deduced from the present Government of India Act. The principal matter which Parliament will be called on to consider at the final stage will be, of course, proposals for the amendment of that Act.

The Government of India Act, however, is a statute of over 150 clauses and five schedules; moreover, the Act itself provides for the making of Rules dealing with topics of the first order of importance, such as the working out of the system of dyarchy in the provinces, the electoral code, and other matters. The

text of the Rules is considerably longer than the Act itself. Even if all these documents were readily available, and in the hands of those who will shortly be called upon to consider them, it would still, we think, be absolutely necessary to present the result of them afresh in a form best calculated to bring out their main features, and to provide a working basis for what is to follow. But, in fact, the necessary material is not as a whole readily available, and we have spared no pains to make our own account of the present constitution of British India, and of the relation between its different parts, as informing and comprehensive as we can.

The constitutional history leading up to the present Reforms is dealt with in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, and in many authoritative works. Some knowledge of this is, of course, essential to a due understanding of the present structure, but save for a brief introduction to Part II and some incidental references, we have thought it unnecessary to add yet another description to those already available of the steps which led up to the establishment of the existing constitution.

9. In Parts III and IV of this volume we pass to the first matter which is specifically referred to us for our report by the terms of the section under which the Statutory Commission was constituted, viz., the working of the existing system of government. We deal in Part III with "**The Working of the Reformed Constitution.**". Here, therefore, we are entering into territory where the sections of the Government of India Act and the contents of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report cannot by themselves serve as guides, though it is highly instructive to observe how far the indications of the one and the intentions of the other may be regarded as realised in practice. We have, for the purposes of this part of our Report, made as close a study as we could of the political history of India since the Government of India Act came into force. There are extensive records on the subject, including the Annual Reports presented to Parliament in accordance with the requirements of section 26 of the Act and the official volumes of proceedings of the various legislative bodies. We have seen several of these legislative bodies in session, and have had evidence from, and many opportunities of contact with, officials and non-officials who have had actual experience of working the Reforms. The Government of India and the various provincial Governments provided the Statutory Commission with elaborate surveys; which in their turn have been the subject of enquiry and criticism at the sittings of the Joint Conference between ourselves and the Indian Committees when evidence was being taken. We have further had the advantage of studying the Reports of the various Provincial Committees which sat with us in India, and also the Report, with appended Minutes, which is the outcome of the long and laborious consideration of the Members of the Indian Central Committee.

Part III, then, includes chapters dealing with the relation between the electorate and its legislating representatives, the interplay of forces between the legislatures and the Executive, and the course of Indian politics during the last ten years in the light of the Reforms. We have included an estimate of the extent to which political parties are developing in British India, and a survey of some of the influences which go to form political opinion.

10. So far, however, in Parts II and III, we have been dealing primarily with the statutory structure of the Government of India and its working. This statutory structure is chiefly concerned with the Indian legislatures, their powers and composition, and with the extent to which the Executive is responsible to them. But no account of the constitutional system of British India would be complete which did not deal with the machinery of administration and the way it works. We propose, therefore, in Part IV to give a separate description of **"The Administrative and Judicial System"**. This includes an account of the functions and organisation of the various administrative services, such as the Indian Civil Service and the Police Service as well as of various provincial services. On the judicial side, we shall have to explain the constitution of the various High Courts, and of the inferior tribunals which administer civil and criminal justice. All these matters are, of course, vitally involved in proposals for constitutional change, and the future of the day-by-day administration in the hands of executive and judicial officers needs to be considered in relation to possible developments of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms no less carefully than the revision of the structure and powers of legislative bodies. We propose in this Part also to include a description and criticism of local self-government and an account of the minor administrations, especially of the **North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan**. This will complete the picture of the existing system as it affects the life and well-being of the inhabitants of British India.

11. Part V is entitled **"The System of Public Finance."** Finance enters so deeply and at so many points into the structure of Indian government that we have found it necessary to describe the present situation, and how it has come about, in considerable detail. The Commission was so fortunate as to secure the services of Mr. W. T. Layton as Financial Assessor. Mr. Layton accompanied us on our second visit to India. As the result of his minute and expert investigation, he has provided us with a Report which we shall include in our second volume and on which our proposals regarding Finance are largely based. But in order to appreciate the extremely important issues involved, we must first give a full account of the fiscal situation as it is.



12. Part VI deals with another topic which is, by the terms of the statute, specifically included in the Statutory Commission's inquiry. This is "**The Growth of Education in British India.**" Here again we have been much assisted by experts. The Review drawn up by the Auxiliary Committee, over which Sir Philip Hartog presided, has already been published and we have made extensive use of it in framing this part of our Report.

Finally, in Part VII, which is entitled "**Public Opinion in India**", we shall briefly indicate our view of the extent of political consciousness and our estimate of the forces at work in Indian public life to-day.

### Volume Two.

13. These seven Parts constitute the first volume, and will furnish, so far as we are able to do so, a survey of the matters necessary to be appreciated and borne in mind before we enter upon the second and concluding portion of our task and report "as to whether and to what extent it is desirable to establish the principle of responsible government, or to extend, modify, or restrict the degree of responsible government now existing in British India."

Our second volume, therefore, discusses future developments in connection with various matters dealt with in Volume I, including the position of the Indian States, and makes a series of proposals and recommendations based on the survey we have outlined. We have examined many schemes and suggestions. The material is abundant and, while it is true that we were denied the direct testimony of some important bodies of Indian opinion, we have had the fullest opportunity of studying the Report of the Committee appointed by the All-Parties Conference, 1928 (commonly called the "Nehru Report"), and have not failed to give due attention to its contents, and to other still more recent expositions of contemporary Indian opinion. We do not feel, therefore, that we have been deprived of assistance from such quarters, and we have, in addition, a mass of interesting and suggestive proposals put forward at our request by the various provincial Governments, by the Provincial Committees, and by a wide range of unofficial bodies, both European and Indian, from all parts of India. Our conclusions are based upon an examination of all this material and upon our own enquiries and deliberations.

14. We propose that Volume I of our Report should be made public a short time before Volume II. The problems connected with the future constitutional development of India are of such complexity and importance that we are unwilling to see our proposals for their treatment thrown into the arena of discussion and controversy before there has been time to examine

and digest the survey of the present position on which our recommendations are based, and in the light of which we believe them to be justified. If the account we have given in Volume I is just and fair, we believe that our recommendations in Volume II will be found to be wise and necessary. The general arrangement of Volume II will be found at the beginning of that volume.

In handling matters so various and so vital, it appears to us to be absolutely necessary first to establish the greatest possible measure of agreement as to the fundamentals of the Indian problem, before hastening to consider the method, the pace and the direction of the advance that can now be made along the road towards its ultimate solution.

## PART I.—THE CONDITIONS OF THE PROBLEM.

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## CHAPTER 1.—PRELIMINARY AND STATISTICAL.

15. The central mass of Asia throws out to the west, beyond the Urals, the sub-continent which we call Europe, and to the south, beyond the higher barrier of the Himalayas, the sub-continent which we call India. Various races of the same Aryan stock, presumably migrating from some common centre in distant ages, have established themselves in both these sub-continents. Whence they came, and what proportions they bear to other and earlier races, are matters of doubt and controversy. In the case of India, at any rate, there remain intermingled with the descendants of Aryan invaders, as we shall have occasion to point out later on, very large numbers who are believed to represent pre-Aryan inhabitants, as well as considerable infiltrations from other sources. There are civilisations of equal antiquity with that of India which have passed completely away; but in much of India there is an unchanged outlook on life, a continuing social tradition, and a characteristic philosophy that endures. Hindu orthodoxy is still governed by interpretations of the contents of the Vedas. Systems of medicine which are coeval with Hippocrates still have their exponents and their adherents. In spite of the eagerness with which political India is embracing modern ideas of government, the ancient social system of Hinduism, which has evolved a rigid complication of innumerable castes, from the Brahmin at the top to the pariah at the bottom, continues to control the lives and thoughts of more than two hundred out of the 320 millions of the population of India with a persistence and authority undreamed of in the western world.

16. Europe (if Russia be excluded) possesses a real unity, though no one is likely to fall into the error of regarding Europe as a single nation. In the case of India, a sense of unity is growing, too, but it is largely the outcome of the most recent stage of its history, during which the influence and authority of British rule over the whole area have made it possible to speak of India as a single entity. This tends to obscure, to the casual western observer, the variegated assemblage of races and creeds which make up the whole. Two other influences

making for unification must be taken into full account. One is the prevalence of English as the general means of communication among educated men in different parts of India.\* The other is the growth of a passionate determination among the politically minded classes of all Indian races and religions to assert and uphold the claim of India as a whole to its due place in the world. It would be a profound error to allow geographical dimensions or statistics of population or complexities of religion and caste and language to belittle the significance of what is called the "Indian Nationalist Movement." True it is that it directly affects the hopes of a very small fraction of the teeming peoples of India. True it may be that its leaders do not reflect the active sentiments of masses of men and women in India, who know next to nothing of politicians and are absorbed in pursuing the traditional course of their daily lives. But none the less, however limited in numbers as compared with the whole, the public men of India claim to be spokesmen for the whole, and in India the Nationalist movement has the essential characteristic of all such manifestations—it concentrates all the forces which are roused by the appeal to national dignity and national self-consciousness.

#### Areas.

17. At the end of this volume is a map, in colours, by reference to which the figures of area and population relating to India may be more readily followed and understood. These figures are tabulated in an Appendix at the end of this Part of the Report.† The total area involved amounts to about 1,800,000 square miles—that is to say, more than twenty times the area of Great Britain. Another method of comparison, which is often employed, is to say that India is as large as the whole of continental Europe without Russia, and this remains true even though the map of Europe after the war is consulted. Of the total area of India, approximately 700,000 square miles (yellow)—more than one-third of the whole—lie within the boundaries of the Indian States, which are not British territory at all, though they are under the suzerainty of the British Crown.

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\* Nearly all the debating in the various Indian legislatures is conducted in English as the necessary medium of communication. The occasional use of a vernacular tongue only serves to emphasize the exception. For example, in the Madras Legislative Council, Tamil-speaking members will be understood only by a minority; Telugu and Kanarese are in the same case; and English provides the greatest common measure. Great efforts have been made, as is natural, by Nationalists to treat Hindi as the governing language of political India, and it or its allied tongues have the widest vogue of any Indian tongue; but it is significant that at the annual assembly of the Congress Party, as well as of other All-India gatherings, English is widely used, as it must be. Of course, this prevailing *lingua franca* is only available for the educated few. The masses are as ignorant of it as the masses of Europe are of Latin.

† Appendix I, pp. 108-110.

These States are nearly 600 in number and vary in size from Kashmir or Hyderabad, the largest, with an area greater than England and Scotland, to properties of a few acres. The rest, which constitutes British India, is made up of nine "Governors' Provinces" together with certain other areas, of which the most important is the North-West Frontier Province.

The largest of the Governors' Provinces, viz., Burma, covers a greater area than the whole of France; the Presidency of Madras and the Presidency of Bombay, which come next in size, are each of them bigger than Italy; the Punjab, the United Provinces and the Central Provinces each exceed Great Britain in size; the area of the province known as Bihar and Orissa closely approximates to that of England and Scotland together; the Presidency of Bengal is somewhat smaller than this; and Assam, the smallest in area of the Governors' Provinces, is of the size of England taken alone.

### Population.

18. If we turn from areas to populations, the scale of things is not less important to be borne in mind. The total population of India, according to the last available census (March, 1921), is 318,942,000, or about one-fifth of that of the whole world. Of these, 247,000,000 were enumerated in British India and 71,900,000 were classed as in the Indian States.\* Thus, while the Indian States constitute fully one-third of India in area, they contain between one-fourth and one-fifth of its total population. British India, therefore, as the Montagu-Chelmsford Report pointed out,† has nearly two-and-a-half times the population of the United States; Bengal and the United Provinces have, each of them, more inhabitants than Great Britain, and Madras about the same number; Bihar and Orissa comes next with 34,000,000; the Punjab has just over and Bombay just under 20,000,000; the vast area of Burma contains 13,000,000; the Central Provinces have slightly more; and Assam completes the tale with 7,500,000 inhabitants, a figure which approximates to the population of Belgium or Sweden or Holland.

### Languages.

19. To immensity of area and of population must be added the complication of language. Among the educated minority, English is the means of communication, not only for official purposes, but for any form of intercourse on an All-India basis. No single vernacular tongue has so wide a range. But the last census showed that only 2½ million persons (16 in every thousand males and two in every thousand females) were literate in English. The language with the widest currency among the

\* This total of 71,900,000 includes the population of certain tribal areas in the North West Frontier Province.

† M/C Report, para. 133.

general population is Hindustani in its two forms and scripts "Urdu" and "Hindi." Urdu was the language of the camp and court of the Muhammadan invader and Moslems generally prefer to use the Arabic script and to include words of Persian origin. Hindus, on the other hand, while speaking the same tongue, employ a Sanskritic script and use derivatives from Sanskrit. This language might well have become the official language of the administration, but for the victory of the "Anglicists" a century ago, when Persian was ousted in favour of English as the official medium. But Hindustani is far from being generally understood all over India. For example, in the Madras Presidency, the prevailing vernaculars belong to a totally different family of speech, the Dravidian family, represented principally by Telugu—which is also spoken in Hyderabad State—Tamil, Kanarese (which is also the main language of Mysore) and Malayalam. Bengali is the natural tongue of nearly 50 millions of people in Bengal, Western Assam, Bihar and Orissa. Marathi is spoken in parts of Bombay, the Central Provinces, Berar and Hyderabad; Punjabi in the Punjab and Kashmir; Gujarathi in Gujerat and Baroda State; Rajasthani in Rajputana and Central India; Sindhi in Sind; and so on. Burma and the Assam hills, again, use tongues of an entirely distinct linguistic family. The census enumerates altogether 222 vernaculars for India, but, without going into all these details, it is enough to say that a man who wished to make himself generally understood in all parts of India (without including special areas or remote tribes) would have to be master of as many separate tongues as a linguist who was prepared to accomplish the same achievement throughout Europe.

20. It is manifest, therefore, that, so far as the factors of area, population and language enter into the conditions of the problem, Parliament must, as the Montagu-Chelmsford Report insisted, "face its immensity and difficulty."\* We are far from saying that the constitutional future of British India can be decided by statistics, but we are clear that it cannot be evolved by ignoring their significance.

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\* M/C Report, para. 133.

## CHAPTER 2.—THE COUNTRYSIDE AND THE TOWNS.

**Predominance of Agriculture.**

21. Far more important than the counting of heads and the measuring of distances is a due appreciation of the life of the people to whom these figures apply and for the sake of whom any system of government should exist. We shall in subsequent chapters attempt a sketch of the diversities of creed and caste, which are so striking a feature of Indian society. But first we must emphasize, as did the authors of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, the predominantly rural character of the Indian population. We cannot hope to better the description contained in a paragraph of that Report.

"In England and Wales four-fifths of the people live in towns. India has many ancient and historic cities, but, taken all together, they hold but a tiny fraction of her enormous population. It may, perhaps, be assumed that the first approach to urban conditions occurs when ten thousand people reside together in one place; for on that scale questions of water-supply and lighting and drainage—the material things which awake men to a consciousness of their common needs as neighbours—begin to be a serious concern. On that basis we may say that 226 out of 244 millions of people in British India live a rural life: and the proportion of these who ever give a thought to matters beyond the horizon of their villages is very small. Agriculture is the one great occupation of the people. In normal times a highly industrialised country like England gives 58 persons out of every hundred to industry, and only 8 to agriculture. But India gives out of every hundred 71 to agriculture or pasture, 12 to industry, 5 to trade, 2 to domestic service, 1½ to the professions, and 1½ to Government service or the Army. In the whole of India the soil supports 226 out of 315 millions, and 208 millions of them get their living directly by, or depend directly upon, the cultivation of their own or others' fields. What concerns them is mainly the rainfall or the irrigation supply from wells or canals, the price of grain and cloth, the payment of rent to the landlord or revenue to the State, the repayment of advances to the village banker, the observance of religious festivals, the education of their sons, the marriage of their daughters, their health and that of their cattle. They visit the local town on bazaar days and the sub-divisional or district centre rarely on business or litigation. They are not concerned with district boards or municipal boards; many of them know of no executive power above the district officer, and of Parliament or even of the legislative councils they have never heard. In one province it is stated that 93 per cent. of the people live and die in the place where they were born. Similar concerns, are, perhaps, the main interests of the population of some country districts in the United Kingdom. But in India the conditions indicated apply to the great mass of the population."\*

22. This was written 12 years ago. The decennial census of 1921 has intervened, and the figures and percentages need some trifling adjustment. The reformed constitution has now been in operation over a large part (but not the whole) of British India for nine years and, short as this time is, we must not ignore any effect which it may already have had upon the rural outlook. But the substantial truth of the picture remains, and will long

\* M/C Report, para. 133.

remain. The organisation of Indian industry in certain large towns is every year assuming greater importance; facilities for the villager to visit an adjoining town or reach the railway are increasing and in many country centres during the last year or two the enterprising proprietor of a motor-bus can count on a full load; three general elections for the provincial councils and for the Central Legislative Assembly have taken place, and some 3 per cent. of the rural population (about 10 per cent. of the adult males) have had the novel experience of visiting a polling-booth and being helped to cast a vote; elections for local bodies some of which are of less recent origin, and which more closely touch both the interest and the understanding of the countryside, have occasionally stirred the lives of a slightly larger fraction; villagers have been gathering in the cool of the day to listen to the contents of a vernacular newspaper communicated by one who could read it; co-operative societies in many districts are beginning to give the agriculturist a better sense of the importance of working with his neighbour for some common purpose; and the organisation of this or that group of politicians in the towns may have its representative in the village teacher or tradesman or small official. But any quickening of general political judgment, any widening of rural horizons beyond the traditional and engrossing interest of weather and water and crops and cattle, with the round of festivals and fairs and family ceremonies, and the dread of famine or flood—any such change from these immemorial preoccupations of the average Indian villager is bound to come very slowly indeed.

#### **The Linlithgow Report.**

23. The latest and most authoritative survey of the conditions of Indian village life is to be found in the Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture in India.\* That Commission, which was presided over by the Marquis of Linlithgow, was appointed in 1926. It made two comprehensive tours in India for the purpose of collecting evidence and taking observations, and signed its Report in April, 1928. We venture to express the opinion that no one not acquainted with Indian rural life by experience on the spot, can regard himself as adequately informed of the *terrain* to which projects of constitutional reform are to be applied until he has made some study of the survey made by the Agricultural Commission. We refer more particularly to Chapters I (pp. 5 to 14) and XIV (pp. 477 to 510) of the Report, and it is from these Chapters that we have extracted most of the short description contained in the five following paragraphs. It is dangerous to generalise about anything in India, and there are of course material differences in rural life, as in everything else, in different provinces. What follows must be regarded as a general, and to some extent a composite, picture. It carries the authority of the members, both Indian and British, of the Agricultural Commission, and our own observations entirely confirm it.

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\* Cmd. 3132 of 1928.



### Characteristics of Village Life.

24. Almost everywhere in India it would appear that, from time immemorial, the rural population has lived in small villages, the mud or bamboo houses of which are huddled together in a more or less compact area situated in the midst of the fields which provide the means of livelihood to their occupants. The farms and farmsteads which are so prominent a feature of the rural life of Western countries are almost entirely absent.\* There is no obvious link between the home of the individual cultivator and the fields he tills. His house is in the village, and the fields which make up his small holding are scattered over the area of land attached to it. In the south and east, holdings average about five acres; elsewhere not more than half of them exceed this limit. Most of the 500,000 villages have not yet been touched by metalled roads or railways; post offices are many miles apart; and telegraph offices still more distant from each other. Except in the north-west, the whole of the country is dependent on the monsoon, and all major agricultural operations are fixed and timed by this phenomenon. Unless perennial irrigation is available, climatic conditions thus restrict agricultural operations to a few months of the year. Under the prevailing system of tillage, the small holdings do not provide occupation for more than half the time of the cultivator. The urban population being relatively small, the demand for agricultural produce for final consumption in the towns is slight in comparison with the whole volume of production. Circumstances therefore have combined to maintain what is, in large measure, a self-sufficing type of agriculture.

25. There have been many developments in the Indian countryside since the government of India passed in 1858 from the hands of the East India Company to those of the Crown, but the main characteristics of village life are still those of the centuries anterior to British rule. Each village tends to be self-contained; in each will usually be found some persons with permanent title in the land, either as owners or tenants with hereditary occupancy rights; of these, some cultivate all they hold, others with larger areas at their disposal rent out to tenants, on a yearly agreement, a part or the whole of their lands; below these in the scale are agricultural labourers, frequently of different castes from the actual cultivators; some of these have acquired small plots in proprietary right or permanent tenure; some have a field or two on rent; many are members of the depressed classes; some work in the fields only at times of pressure, and are mainly engaged in crafts such as leather work, or in tasks regarded as menial. The vast majority of the peasants live in debt to the moneylender, who is often established in their midst. Included in the village population will be certain village

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\* The chief exceptions are on the Malabar Coast and in parts of Bengal. (See Bengal Census of 1921, p. 124.)

officials, generally hereditary, such as the headman, the accountant, the watchman—persons carrying different titles in different provinces, but representing the traditional organisation of village life. In all but the smallest villages, there are one or more skilled artisans, carpenters or ironsmiths, who provide and repair the simple agricultural implements, bullock gear, and water lifts. Household requirements are supplied by a shop or two, whose owners frequently provide the first market for village produce and add to their earnings by engaging in moneylending. Almost invariably there is a religious building : a temple, shrine, or mosque.

### **Limitations to Rural Progress.**

26. Three considerations have combined to limit any incentive upon the rural cultivator to add to his wealth by producing more than he requires for the immediate needs of himself and his family. In the first place, the tillers of the soil are pursuing traditional methods upon holdings inherited from their fathers before them and divided, as Hindu and customary law prescribed, in equal shares amongst sons or male agnates. For generations past, the pursuits of the people have been predetermined by something in the nature of an occupational caste or guild system. The admirable work done by the agricultural departments of Government, the teaching by precept and example of more scientific agricultural methods, the provision of better seed and purer stock, the remarkable effort in the Gurgaon District of the Punjab which is chiefly due to the personality of Mr. F. L. Brayne—all these things are having their effect and have good results to show. But the root facts of Indian village life remain and must be appreciated no less by the constitutional reformer than by the agricultural adviser.

27. Secondly, the lack of communications and of organised trade and commerce have been in the past, and still are to a most material degree, obstacles to a rise in the standard of life, no less than to the wider political outlook of the Indian villager. Unless communications develop and organised trading with distant customers arises, the cultivating classes have no motive, beyond that which may be furnished by a local demand, to produce in excess of their own needs, and where everyone in the same neighbourhood is growing the same crops the local demand is not likely to provide a great incentive. Increased labour brings no adequate reward, if there is no use or enjoyment to which the increased out-turn can be put. The cultivation of a small holding by the joint efforts of a family (with the women often taking their full burden of heavy toil) provides in normal times for the simple standard of living which is all that the cultivator dreams of attaining. Here, again, the last 50 years have seen influences at work which have had profound effects upon the development of Indian agriculture, though it is difficult to see the result in the inspection of an ordinary Indian village.

The carrying out of vast projects of irrigation has transformed many areas from the barest desert to fertile ground favourable for cereals, or sugar, or cotton, or other crops. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 revolutionised the figures for the export of Indian agricultural products. The total exports of India at the time when the Canal was opened were valued at Rs.80 crores, then about £80,000,000. For the three years ending 1926-27 the average value of the annual exports of India exceeded Rs.350 crores, i.e., about £262,500,000. And by far the greater part of the volume of exports is contributed by agricultural products, cotton, jute, oil seeds, wheat and tea being the chief items. At the same time roads have improved and extended, and railways have spread, with the result that the principal agricultural products of India find a ready sale at a distance. None the less, rural India remains pre-eminently the land of the small holder; large scale farming, even in the altered conditions of to-day, is practised by few. The typical agriculturist is still the man who possesses a pair of bullocks and cultivates a few acres, with the assistance of his family and of occasional hired labour.

#### Increase in Rural Security.

28. There is a third reason, and it is far from being the least significant of the three, which goes to explain the backwardness of Indian agriculture in the past and at the same time to account for later progress. When the cultivator cannot be certain that he will be left in possession of the harvest he has sown, the incentive to put more labour and capital into the land or to cultivate a larger area than is required for the maintenance of himself and his family is lacking. There were few periods in the recorded history of India anterior to the British administration when, over large tracts, the internal peace was not greatly disturbed and the demands of the State on the land were not heavy to an extent which made its possession a liability rather than an asset. The first factor which changed the conditions which prevailed over the greater part of India up till the early years of the 19th century was the establishment of peace within the country and of security on its borders. Following close upon the establishment of internal security came that exhaustive and elaborate inquiry into, and record of, rights in land, which forms the basis of rural prosperity. With the detailed record of rights in the land came the "settlement," based upon the system already in existence, of the government demand for land revenue, either permanently or for periods sufficiently long to relieve the revenue payer from the harassing anxiety of uncertainty.

Side by side with this transformation was developed the modern policy for providing against and dealing with the ever-haunting fear of the Indian agriculturist—the peril of occasional famine. In earlier days, when favourable seasons yielded a

plus, this was stored locally, but the contingency of famine was too remote to determine mass conduct and, for long, governments met famine when and where it occurred. The modern view of the responsibility of the State was not reached till long after India had passed under the Crown, and it was not until the last decades of the 19th century that a definite famine policy was formulated. Since the series of enquiries into famine came to a close in 1901, great economic changes have taken place in India. The development of irrigation on a vast scale in the Punjab has immensely increased the resources of that province, and similar enterprises are in operation elsewhere. The Sukkur Barrage on the Indus will, when completed, bring water to a barren area in Sind larger than the whole cultivated area of Egypt. The Lloyd Dam, south of Poona, which was opened in 1928 by the then Governor of Bombay, Sir Leslie Wilson, is another great work, containing indeed a larger mass of masonry than the Assuan Dam itself.

The effects of improvements in both internal and external communications have made themselves increasingly felt and the evidence of growing rural prosperity, since the commencement of the present century, is admitted by all who have long and personal experience of the country to be manifest. The system of agriculture followed in many places, as, for example, in the cultivation of rice in the deltas, has attained a very high standard and rural India to-day lies open as, perhaps, the widest field in the world for the application of all the help that science can afford and that organisation, training and education can bring within reach. Chapter XIV of the Agricultural Commission's Report contains a detailed and most instructive account of what has been done in the rural areas of India in the direction of improving public health, in grappling with disease, in promoting co-operation and in endeavouring to raise the standard of life. No fair-minded observer visiting the Indian countryside to-day can fail to be struck alike by the magnitude of the work to be done and by the zeal and exertion with which those, whether officials or Ministers, who have the work in hand, are tackling their stupendous task.

But the fact remains, and must remain, that in a country so extensive as India, the effects of any single measure are apt to be so dispersed that they can be discerned with difficulty and that in spite of the progress that undoubtedly has been made and of the great increase in the gross wealth of the country, the ordinary cultivator on his tiny plot is still a man of few resources, with small means for meeting his limited needs—usually illiterate, though not on that account necessarily wanting in shrewdness—with an outlook confined by tradition and environment, and needing above all things that those who consider his future as a citizen should understand something of his life as a man.

### Urban Conditions.

29. We now turn to the urban areas, and endeavour to present in like fashion some slight picture of contemporary conditions so far as these bear directly upon the constitutional problem. The last Indian census enumerated close upon 319 millions of people in India, and of these less than  $32\frac{1}{2}$  millions were counted in urban areas. This is 10.2 per cent. of the whole, and forms a striking contrast with the corresponding figure of 79 per cent., which the last census found to be the proportion of the population of England to be classed as urban. The distribution of the urban population of India is very unequal; it varies from 23 per cent. in the British areas included in the Bombay Presidency, to 3 per cent. in Assam. The small number of very large towns in India is indeed most remarkable; Calcutta and Bombay have more than a million inhabitants each; Madras and its cantonment contain just over half a million; but in the whole of India there are only 33 towns which have a population of over 100,000. The largest town of any Indian State is Hyderabad which, with its cantonment, returned 404,000. Nearly three-quarters of the urban population of India is found in the smaller towns, which are of a distinct type differing from the great cities. Each has its bazaar quarter where shopkeepers and merchants congregate. Any manufacturing industry there is will be usually carried on in small workshops. Many of these smaller towns combine the status of a municipality with that of the headquarters of a surrounding district, whose administration, judicial business, and local government centre there, much as the affairs of an English county are concentrated at the principal county town. But there are indications that, as Indian commerce and industry develop, the medium-sized country town tends to lose population while the larger cities continue to grow.

30. What however is more difficult to describe and more important to grasp is the general nature of the urban population, and here again the figures of the Indian census convey information which is of more than purely statistical value. In the great manufacturing cities, most of the inhabitants are temporary residents, very largely males, who do not bring their families with them. Calcutta, for example, is the birthplace of only 335 per thousand of its inhabitants. The number of permanent residents of Calcutta who look upon the city as their home is probably not more than 25 per cent. The census found that there were more than twice as many males in the city as females; in Bombay the disparity is almost equally striking. The explanation is that enormous numbers who work in the industrial towns of India still do not regard themselves as permanent town dwellers; they come from the countryside, sometimes indeed from rural areas in another province, where they have left their families in their village home. Most of them come from the lowest rural stratum—landless men, like members of the depressed classes, or impoverished small-holders.

Many of them will return for the season of planting or harvest. Hence arises one at least of the difficulties in organising the industrial workers of India.

### **The Indian Industrial Worker.**

31. The Indian peasant who goes to some busy centre of activity to supplement his income, often lives there under conditions which are almost unimaginable to the British working man. Climate renders possible, and habit makes natural, a state of things which Indian social reformers, working for the improvement of the poorest of their fellow-citizens, are bound to take most seriously to heart. When the census of 1921 was taken, 70 per cent. of the tenements in Bombay were classified as consisting of only one room, and the average number of persons in this one room tenement was ascertained to be 4.03. The census report declared that in Karachi the overcrowding was even worse than in Bombay, and the congestion of the poorer quarters in many other towns is almost as bad. The conditions under which most of the industrial workers live tend to be much worse than the conditions under which they work. The immigrant to the city preserves his village standards of life; conditions which may pass muster in rural areas cannot be observed in a crowded town without creating a slum. Yet India, now a member of the League of Nations, and in close touch with the International Labour Bureau, has its Factory Act passed in accordance with the recommendations of the Washington Conference and other international conventions, the administration of which is in the hands of provincial Governments as a "reserved subject" with a Chief Inspector of Factories in each province. Unfortunately, the number of inspectors is not always adequate. We shall have some further observations to make on the relations of the State to industry in India in a later section of our Report.

### **Urban Housing.**

32. There has been a material improvement in housing conditions in some industrial areas since the census report of 1921 was drawn up. The terrible slums of Indian cities mostly grew up in the last century, and the work of Improvement Boards, even in the places where they were set up, was at first slow and limited. But now-a-days, as the debates in the Legislative Assembly and elsewhere have shown, the conscience of enlightened India has been stirred. Careful municipal control of new buildings is now the rule, and in Bombay, for example, the City Improvement Trust—now merged in the municipality—has to its credit a list of large schemes which are providing light and air in areas formerly the site of insanitary hovels. The work has been carried out with the co-operation and support of business men, both British and Indian, and of local landlords, and has been supplemented by the housing schemes of the Bombay Government, which are helping to provide out of public funds a better class of tenement. Similar

number of very large towns in India is indeed most remarkable. Calcutta and Bombay have more than a million inhabitants each; Madras and its cantonment contain just over half a million; but in the whole of India there are only 33 towns which have a population of over 100,000. The largest town of any Indian State is Hyderabad which, with its cantonment, returns 404,000. Nearly three-quarters of the urban population of India is found in the smaller towns, which are of a distinct type differing from the great cities. Each has its bazaar quarter where shopkeepers and merchants congregate. Any manufacturing industry there is will be usually carried on in small workshops. Many of these smaller towns combine the status of a municipality with that of the headquarters of a surrounding district, whose administration, judicial business, and local government centre there, much as the affairs of an English county are concentrated at the principal county town. But there are indications that, as Indian commerce and industry develop, the medium-sized country town tends to lose population while the larger cities continue to grow.

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progress has begun in other of the large Presidency towns, and many municipal bodies have made a start elsewhere. Some of the jute companies of Calcutta have laid out for their work-people long lines of healthy tenements, which form a striking contrast to the filthy shanties to be seen in the same area. In Cawnpore we inspected the modern quarters provided by one of the leading textile firms for the families of their operatives, and there is a distinct tendency on the part of many big employers in India to develop the welfare side of their relations with their employees. But when all has been said, there is a vast amount of work still to be done before the general standard of urban housing for working people in India can be regarded as reasonably good, and the most difficult part of the task will be to instil into the minds of the slum-dwellers themselves the desire for something better.

### **The Educated Classes.**

33. We have written at this length of the life of the Indian villager and of the Indian industrial worker because it is the future of these many millions which must be the chief concern of all who take a broad view of Indian problems, and because the greatness of the task still to be discharged can only be measured when one appreciates how much must be done to raise their standard of life and to fit them for the responsibilities of citizenship. As yet their education is far too low to admit of effective and continuous organisation amongst themselves, and those who speak for Indian labour are not as a rule men who have risen from their own ranks.

There is a university in the capital town of every Governor's province except Assam, as well as in many other important and famous centres, such as Benares and Aligarh. They are the avenue through which the educated youth of India, in ever increasing numbers, seeks to qualify itself for the professions, or for politics, or for government service. The constant tendency of such a training is to turn these students' thoughts to urban pursuits, and to give them a distaste for the life of the countryside from which many of them have come.

It is inevitable that in India those who give their attention to political affairs should be found mainly in the towns. It is in the towns that are to be found the barristers and journalists who predominate among the leaders of Indian political opinion and from whose ranks for the most part are drawn the propagandists, candidates and public representatives of all political parties and communities. Every considerable town has a local Bar, and the soil of India is prolific of litigation. The Bar Library is a natural forum for political discussion. Law provides a career open to the talents in which the educated of all castes and communities may hope to make their way to private fortune or public position. In the towns too will be found the professors, teachers and doctors, and above all the great mass of those in the employment of the Government from the I.C.S.

man to the copying clerk. Numerous in the provincial capitals, but with some representatives in every considerable town, the members of the public services form a section of educated India, less vocal, but more experienced and responsible than any other.

The Indian educated class presents a feature which must be regarded as unique. For here is a body of men, educated, working, and, in many instances, thinking in an alien Western language; imbibing with that education the principles and traditions of a Western civilisation and polity, and yet keenly conscious of its unity with the mass of the Indian people whose minds are set in the immemorial traditions of the East.

#### **Rank and Wealth.**

34. We shall deal elsewhere with the influences of religion and of caste upon the structure of Indian society, and our account for the present must close with some description of the aristocratic elements which wield so considerable an influence over the whole of India.

The great landlords form a nobility which both claims and exercises the privilege of high rank. The advent of British rule has not destroyed the exceptional status of these all but feudal chiefs, and their influence in their own neighbourhood remains predominant, though their actual powers have diminished. They are marked out as persons of authority and prestige in a society which is far from objecting to social distinctions. The Taluqdars of Oudh hold their formal assemblies in the Palace at Lucknow which used to belong to the Kings of that Province. The leading Zemindars, many of them bearing titles of honour conferred by the King-Emperor, are looked up to by humbler neighbours as their natural leaders. Many of the large landowners in different parts of British India are men who have that stake in the country which consists of great possessions; side by side with them are other landed proprietors of more moderate means, some of them living in picturesque surroundings and rural seclusion amid their tenants and retainers.

The survey may be completed by referring to the great merchant princes of India, such as those whose mansions stand on Malabar Hill in Bombay. It was British capital that began the modern process of industrialism in India, but more and more commercial enterprise is falling into Indian hands. Most of the share capital in the jute mills on the Hooghly is Indian; the vast majority of the cotton factories of Bombay are Indian; and, while it was British enterprise which first established and developed the tea gardens of Assam and elsewhere, these undertakings are now carried on side by side with many that are Indian owned. India is now one of the eight most important industrial areas in the world, and the labour problems of Indian government present the special complication that this industrialisation, which is of extremely modern growth, is displacing the village craftsman, so that large-scale manufacture is being superimposed on the ancient fabric of an elaborately sub-divided and predominantly rural society.

CHAPTER 3.—THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES  
OF INDIA.**Hinduism.**

35. India is a land of almost infinite diversity in its religious aspect. We shall make no attempt to analyse the refinements of difference which from the metaphysical, or doctrinal, or ceremonial point of view may separate those who, for the purpose in hand, are grouped together in a single category. Hinduism counts as its adherents more than two-thirds of the inhabitants of India, and within its comprehensive embrace includes much that might seem to outside observers to be contradictory. "Except, perhaps to the few who understand its philosophical meaning, Hinduism has no one distinguishing central concept. Superimposed on a heterogeneous people differing widely from one another in race, language, and political and social traditions and interests, the vagueness and elasticity of its system, and the protean form of its mythology, its ceremonies, and its ordinances, have enabled it to absorb and overlap the various animistic systems which it encountered."\* The learned and subtle Brahmin of Benares may seem to have nothing in common with the "untouchables" of Dravidian stock living in the *parcheries* of Madras City, who are nevertheless included within the fold of Hinduism while being denied access to its shrines. The sophisticated and Westernised Hindu graduate may seem a being of an entirely different order both from the contemplative devotee living in abstraction from material things, and from the mob of excited worshippers thronging the temples of Shiva or Kali. But all alike are caught up in this marvellous system, so ancient and so persistent, which is the bedrock of indigenous India. It is a religion which touches ordinary acts of daily life at nearly every point, and a philosophy of existence which provides an outlook fundamentally different from that of the creeds of the West.

Hinduism accounts for one-eighth of the population of the globe and one-half of the total inhabitants of the British Empire.

**The Muhammadans.**

36. Dispersed among the 216 millions of Hindus of India are nearly 70 million representatives of a widely different type of culture, not originally or exclusively Indian, but spread throughout India as a consequence of a series of invasions from the North and West which have taken place within historic times. The splendid monuments of Mogul architecture stand as a perpetual reminder of the vanished domination of Muhammadan rule. Yet during the centuries when the material power of Islam was at its highest in India, it was

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\* Report on Census of India, 1921, Vol. I, p. 108.

quite unable to crush the enduring influences of Hinduism. When British authority began to extend over the Indian continent it could, as a neutral, set up and endeavour to apply a canon of tolerance, but it could not alter the essential facts of Hindu-Moslem difference. It would be an utter misapprehension to suppose that Hindu-Moslem antagonism is analogous to the separation between religious denominations in contemporary Europe. Differences of race, a different system of law, and the absence of inter-marriage constitute a far more effective barrier. It is a basic opposition manifesting itself at every turn in social custom and economic competition, as well as in mutual religious antipathy. To-day, in spite of much neighbourly kindness in ordinary affairs, and notwithstanding all the efforts made by men of good will in both communities to promote Hindu-Moslem concord, the rivalry and dissension between these two forces are one of the chief stumbling blocks in the way of smoother and more rapid progress. We regard it as an essential part of our task (as in due course it will be a vital concern of Parliament) to make an impartial survey of the guiding facts of this situation before approaching the question of the method of its constitutional treatment.

37. If we confine ourselves for the moment to British India, the Hindu population amounts to 163 millions and the Muhammadans to approximately 59½ millions. In two of the Governor's Provinces, Muhammadans are in an actual majority; their total in Bengal amounts to 25,210,000 out of the 47 millions which that province contains, and in the Punjab Muhammadans are enumerated at 11,400,000 out of a total of just over 20 millions. In the other seven provinces to which the Reforms have been applied they are everywhere in a minority. In Assam they are 28 per cent. of the population; in Bombay 19 per cent.; in the United Provinces 14 per cent.; in Bihar and Orissa 10 per cent.; and in Madras just over 6 per cent. In the Central Provinces they amount to only half a million out of a total population of nearly 14 millions; and out of Burma's 13 millions (of which more than 11 millions are Buddhists) they number half a million. One of the difficulties, therefore, in adjusting representation in the provincial legislatures—unless for this purpose religious divisions are to be disregarded—is to devise a scheme which takes due account of Muhammadan predominance where it is found to occur, and at the same time provides adequate representation where Moslems are in a minority. It is an elementary reflection, but one not always borne in mind, that weightage in favour of one interest necessarily involves a reduction in the proportionate representation of the rest. In the North West Frontier Province Muhammadans are in a large majority (over 2 millions out of a total of 2½ millions in the administered territory); and in the administered area of Baluchistan they amount to 367,000 out of a total of 420,000.

38. Turning to the Indian States, the total Hindu population is 53½ millions, and the total Muhammadan population 9½ millions. Muhammadans are in a majority in Kashmir though the ruling house is Hindu. On the other hand Hyderabad, with a total population of 12½ millions, of which more than 10½ millions are Hindus, has as its ruler the Nizam who is a Muhammadan.

### Causes of Hindu-Moslem Tension.

39. It is evident, therefore, that the distribution of the population as between Hindus and Muhammadans provides one of the most serious complications for Indian statesmanship, and that this question recurs in different forms and degrees in almost every part of India. The minority community is not concentrated in one part of the area, as Protestants in Ireland tend to be concentrated in Ulster. It is mainly represented in the North-Western parts of India and in Eastern Bengal, but its numbers elsewhere are not sufficiently small to be disregarded and not sufficiently large to claim the mastery of numbers. These being the statistical facts, we must now proceed to give the best account we can of the nature of the antagonisms between these rival communities and to develop, to the extent to which this tension is growing or dying away, and of the influence which these considerations are bound to exercise upon the treatment of the constitutional problem. It unfortunately happens that on Indian soil the opposition of these two faiths is sharpened and intensified by religious practices which are only too likely to provoke mutual ill-feeling. The devout Hindu regards the cow as an object of great veneration, while the ceremonial sacrifice of cows or other animals is a feature of the annual Muhammadan festival known as the Baq'r'Id. Hindu music played through the streets on the occasion of the procession of an idol, or in connection with a marriage celebration, may take place at a time when the Muhammadans of the town are at worship in an adjoining mosque, and hence arises an outbreak of resentment which is apt to degenerate into a serious quarrel. The religious anniversaries observed by Moslems are fixed by reference to a lunar year which does not correspond with the adjustment of the Hindu calendar, and consequently it occasionally happens that dates of special importance in the two religions coincide—for instance, when an anniversary of Moslem mourning synchronises with a day of Hindu rejoicing—and the authorities responsible for the maintenance of law and order are then faced with a time of special anxiety. In spite of the constant watchfulness of the police authorities, and of the earnest efforts of the leaders in both communities to reach a *modus vivendi*, the immediate occasion of communal disorder is nearly always a religious issue. On the other hand, when communal feeling is roused on some matter of secular interest, religious zeal

always present to stimulate conflict, and partisans are not slow to exploit the opportunity.

### **The Present State of Communal Feeling.**

40. It is a lamentable fact that the occasions when Hindu-Muhammadan tension is carried to the point of violent outbreak have not diminished since the Reforms. In the five years 1923 to 1927 approximately 450 lives have been lost and 5,000 persons have been injured in communal riots; these figures include some disturbances in which Sikhs were involved. A statement laid on the table of the Legislative Assembly showed that from September, 1927 to June, 1928 there had been 19 serious Hindu-Muhammadan riots, which had affected every province except Madras. It would serve no useful purpose to reproduce in this Report the details with which we have been supplied; the facts are undeniable, and it is not surprising that Lord Irwin, in his striking appeal soon after he first set foot in India, to the leaders of the two communities to co-operate in a new effort to cope with the evil, should have declared that Hindu-Muhammadan antagonism was "so clearly the dominant issue in Indian life." Every well-wisher of India's constitutional progress must be deeply stirred by the Viceroy's words:—

"Let the leaders and thoughtful men in each community, the Hindu among the Hindus, and Moslem among the Moslems, throw themselves with ardour into a new form of communal work and into a nobler struggle, and fight for toleration. I do not believe that the task is beyond their powers. I see before me two ancient and highly organised societies with able and esteemed public men as their recognised leaders. I cannot conceive that a really sincere and sustained appeal by them to the rank and file of their co-religionists sustained by active propaganda of the new gospel of peace would pass unheeded. In past centuries each community has made its great contribution to the annals of history and civilisation in India. The place that she has filled in the world in past ages has been largely of their creating. I refuse to believe that they can make no contribution now to rescue the good name of India from the hurt which their present discords inflict upon it. . . . In the name of Indian national life, in the name of religion, I appeal to all in each of the two communities who hold position, who represent them in the press, who direct the education of the young, who possess influence, who command the esteem of their co-religionists, who lead them in politics or are honoured by them as divines. Let them begin each in their own community to work untiringly towards this end; boldly to repudiate feelings of hatred and intolerance, actively to condemn and suppress acts of violence and aggression, earnestly to strive to exorcise suspicions and misapprehensions and so create a new atmosphere of trust. I appeal in the name of national life because communal tension is eating into it as a canker. It has suspended its activities. It has ranged its component parts into opposite and hostile camps."\*

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\* At the Chelmsford Club, Simla, on July 17th, 1926.

that separate communal electorates serve to perpetuate political divisions on purely communal lines, and we have every sympathy with those who look forward to the day when a growing sense of common citizenship and a general recognition of the rights of minorities will make such arrangements unnecessary. We shall return to this subject, and make our own observations upon it in our second volume. Here we are only concerned to call attention to the facts of a very serious situation, which every well-wisher of India should do his utmost to improve.

### Buddhists, Sikhs, Jains, and Parsis.

44. Hindus and Moslems between them account for 285½ millions out of the 319 millions of India. The balance, classified by reference to religion, and distinguishing between British India and the Indian States, is accounted for as follows :—

(Figures to nearest thousand).

—	British India.	Indian States.	Total.
Sikhs ... ..	2,367,000	872,000	3,239,000
Jains ... ..	456,000	723,000	1,179,000
Buddhists... ..	11,491,000	80,000	11,571,000
Parsis ... ..	88,000	14,000	102,000
Christians ... ..	3,028,000	1,726,000	4,754,000
Others ... ..	6,941,000	2,874,000	9,815,000

In addition there are 2,814,000 whose religion is not known.

In three cases the adherents of one or other of these faiths will be found almost entirely in a single province. Although the birthplace of Gautama the Buddha lies under the shadow of the Himalayas, and although the places specially associated with his life and teaching are in Bihar and the United Provinces, over 96 per cent. of the Buddhists of India are to be found in Burma.

The small and exceedingly prosperous community of Parsis, who follow the religion of Zoroaster and trace their origin from Persia, reside for the most part in Bombay, though small numbers of the community will be found engaged in commerce in other towns.

The Sikhs of India live almost entirely in the Punjab Province, and in certain Indian States, such as Patiala, which are in the Punjab area. "Sikhism was an attempt to reconcile Hindu beliefs with a purer creed, which rejected polytheism, image worship and pilgrimages. It remained a pacific cult till the political tyranny of the Mussalmans and the social tyranny of the Hindus converted it into a military creed".\* It is a striking circumstance that this small community contributed no less than 80,000 men to serve in the Great War—a larger proportion than any other community in India. The numbers of the Sikh population have rapidly grown in the last thirty years, and the concentration of this vigorous element, with its strong communal attachment, in the single Province of the Punjab, is a fact of great political importance which requires special treatment.

It will be noticed that in the case of the Jains, the larger half of this community is to be found outside British India—mostly in the Bombay States and Rajputana.

### Indian Christians.

45. Of the remaining religious communities, the Indian Christians, from the point of view both of numerical and of political importance, call for special consideration.

A Christian Church has existed in India for over 1,500 years. The old Syrian Christian community in Malabar cherishes a tradition that it was established by the Apostle St. Thomas himself. In any case its great antiquity is undoubted, but it is only in the course of the last half century, since the efforts of Christian missionaries have been concentrated upon the remote village districts, that this religious community has exhibited such rapid growth. It now claims to be the third largest religious body in India, numbering in British India and the Indian States combined about 4½ millions souls, of which 275,000 live directly under the British Raj.† Of the full total, approximately 1½ millions are Roman Catholics, and about 2 millions are comprised in other denominations. Since the year 1851 Indian Christians have considerably more than doubled their numbers.

The many admirably conducted schools and hospitals founded and maintained by Christian missionaries of various nationalities and denominations, some of which we visited during our tours through India, compel a tribute to the splendid services they render. It was the missionaries who were among the pioneers of education for the illiterate; they maintain some of the best medical institutions in the country; and their work among women and children, and for the depressed classes, is of special

\* Report on Census of India, 1921, Vol. I, page 114.

† The totals for Christians in the tabulated statement in paragraph 44 are made up by adding to the above Anglo-Indians and European Christians (including American Missionaries).



significance. Not the least admirable feature of their activities is that they have carried on their labours without offending the susceptibilities either of Moslem or Hindu, and have lived at peace and amity with their neighbours.

The Indian Christian community is widely distributed, but more than half of its members live within the Madras Presidency and the adjoining States. At the last census 82 persons in every thousand of the population of the Presidency of Madras were Christians—a total of 1,361,000. In the State of Cochin the proportion is as large as 268 per thousand, and in Travancore 292 per thousand. There has been a steady growth in the number of adherents to Christianity in southern India. Converts, at any rate in British India, are drawn mostly from the lower castes of the Hindus, especially the depressed classes, and from the aboriginal tribes. People such as these have nothing to lose from abandoning their old attachments and the religion they embrace gives them a new hope and a new standard. When a member of the depressed classes adopts Christianity, the census no longer counts him as included in the former category. There has also been a striking increase in the number of adherents in Assam, Bihar and Orissa, the Central Provinces, and Hyderabad.

The Indian Christians stand high in the table of literacy. More than one in five of them is returned as able to satisfy the test—a remarkable result, considering that so many are drawn from the lowest strata of Hindu society. The Parsis and the Buddhists are the only Indian religious communities which make a better showing. In English education, the Indian Christians are second only to the Parsis, whose advantages are enormously superior. The achievement is a great one and shows what good work is being done in mission schools.

#### **Tribal Religions.**

46. A word should be added on the ancient and obscure faiths which the census groups together under the head of "Tribal Religions." There are still found, in various parts of India, and especially in certain hill and jungle regions, aboriginal tribes whose beliefs as to the unseen world are bound up with the practice of worshipping or propitiating the forces and objects of nature and the spirits which they conceive to reside in natural phenomena. Primitive peoples do not claim to belong to any particular religion: they only know of their own beliefs, and are therefore unconscious of religious classifications. It is a remarkable experience to motor along some wide and shady road in Burma and come suddenly across a gaily decorated tree adorned with gilding and bits of bunting, where the passer-by is wont to make offering to the local *Nat*. The relation between this and Buddhism may be difficult to describe, just as the enumerator must have had a difficult task in drawing the line between the religious attitude of an aboriginal Gond or Bhil and that of some

who have been absorbed into the lowest Hindu castes. These topics are for the anthropologist rather than for the statistician or the legislator.

Dr. J. H. Hutton has written some fascinating chapters on the beliefs of the Angami and the Sema Nagas of the Assam hills. All that it is necessary to record in the present sketch of the religious communities of India is that there are some ten millions of people of various aboriginal stocks whose beliefs cannot properly be classed as falling within any of the great organised religious systems to which we have previously referred.

## CHAPTER 4.—CASTE AND THE DEPRESSED CLASSES.

**The Conception of Caste.**

47. It would be beyond the scope of this Report to enter upon any comprehensive and scientific survey of the caste system of the Hindus, even if we were qualified to attempt it. But some appreciation of the nature and results of that system is essential to an understanding of certain aspects of the Indian constitutional problem. The sub-divisions of Hindu society due to caste are such that it was thought necessary by the Joint Select Committee on the Bill of 1919 to make special provision for certain sections at more than one point of its electoral recommendations. In the Bombay Legislative Council the Mahrattas (including some allied castes), while voting in the same constituencies with the general body of Hindus, were guaranteed the occupation of seven seats; in the Presidency of Madras the fear of Brahmin domination was so strong (though they only constitute 1,397,000 out of a total Hindu population of  $37\frac{1}{2}$  millions) that 28 seats were reserved for non-Brahmins. In fact, however, at each of the three elections which have taken place for the Madras Legislative Council, a considerably larger number of non-Brahmin members have been returned. The whole subject of the representation and protection of the Depressed Classes—a subject which received very brief treatment in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, but which has come to the front in recent years as a question of urgent and widespread concern—is bound up with the operation of the caste system. It is necessary, therefore, that we should devote a section of our Report to the matter.

48. Caste has been described as “the foundation of the Indian social fabric,” at any rate so far as Hindu society is concerned. Every Hindu necessarily belongs to the caste of his parents, and in that caste he inevitably remains. No accumulation of wealth and no exercise of talents can alter his caste status; and marriage outside his caste is prohibited or severely discouraged. It almost invariably happens that every man’s caste is known to his neighbours. In some cases, the application of the rule of caste seems almost to prescribe the means of livelihood of its members; indeed many castes partake of the nature of occupational guilds. Thus the caste system, which may have originated in the preservation of ceremonial purity in social relations and in rules designed to limit admixture of blood, has in the course of ages developed into an institution which assigns to each individual his duty and his position in orthodox Hinduism. He feels the special claim which his caste-fellows have upon him. But the boundary which brings members of the same caste together also serves to separate them from innumerable compartments embracing other castes. And there results a rigid and detailed subdivision of Hindu society which strongly contrasts with the theory (if not always with the application) of equalitarian ideas among Moslems and Christians.

### The Brahmins.

49. The beginnings of the caste system are obscure, and indeed an eminent authority has declared the subject to present an insoluble problem. The original Sanskrit word for caste means "colour," and it is inferred that the system owes its origin to the desire of the fairer Aryan people who migrated into India to preserve their own racial characteristics by the imposition of social barriers between themselves and the dark-skinned races whom they found already established in the Indian peninsula. The term, however, very early in the history of the Hindus, came to denote a social order independently of any actual distinction of colour, and in modern times it has become associated with homogeneous endogamous communities, or groups of families, in many cases following specific occupations. The system is a distinctive product of Brahminism, and perhaps its most outstanding feature has been the dominating influence of the Brahmins. Thousands of years ago, the Brahmins established themselves in a position of ascendancy as the highest caste, with a monopoly of the priestly office and a claim to the monopoly of knowledge. Every priest is, therefore, a Brahmin, and his presence is necessary at the religious ceremonies of most caste Hindu families. But every Brahmin is not discharging the duties of a priest; on the contrary the traditions of learning, the exercise of authority, and the intellectual energy of the Brahmin caste have secured for its members in some parts of India, though not in all, a share of power and influence in the administrative services, at the Bar, on the Bench, and in the Legislatures, which is out of all proportion with their numbers. The ability of the Brahmin Pandit is everywhere acknowledged, and it is amazing to reflect how widely the seven or eight million males, who are all that belong to the Brahmin caste, though everywhere in a small minority, are represented in the public life of India. At the same time many Brahmins follow humbler professions. In the United Provinces, for example, a large number of Brahmins are cooks, many of them in non-Brahmin homes. The Brahmin community also contributes a regiment to the Indian Army. Again, on the west coast, there are definite classes of Brahmins who are petty traders and hereditary cultivators.

### Intermediate Castes.

50. We shall make no attempt to deal by way of detailed description with the intermediate castes which lie between the Brahmins and the depressed classes. Originally, below the Brahmins, were found two other social compartments, the Kshatriya or warrior caste, to which most of the Hindu rulers, in the old days belonged, and the Vashya caste of traders and agriculturists. These three were the *Tvarc* born, hence not only in the world of sense but sharing that higher existence which is betokened by the wearing of the Sacred Thread. Below

them were the Sudras, consisting of the rest of the population not entitled to these privileges but destined irrevocably to serve their superiors and to discharge menial occupations which would be degrading for the Twice-born to fill. The unifying power of Hinduism has absorbed into this lowest class masses of men who were originally outside its pale and many descendants of an earlier and conquered race. By degrees, a four-fold division of Hindu society was developed by a process of further sub-division: new castes and sub-castes were evolved each with its strong bond of internal union and discipline. In the census of thirty years ago (when for the first time a systematic classification was attempted) a list of no less than 2,300 different castes was drawn up. It is noteworthy that at the lowest stratum of all, the process of sub-division persists; there are gradations of caste even among the outcasts.

#### Will Caste Endure?

51. Are these factors of cleavage, which seem inherent in the social system of Hinduism, for ever destined to overshadow the growing sense of a common political nationality? It would be a grave error not to note and make due allowance for the influences—social, economic, and political—which are tending in degrees to sap the rigidity of the caste system. The operation of large-scale industry brings together in a common enterprise men of different castes, and in the mills and mines of India many of them are working side by side in the same occupations. Trains and trams cannot make provision for caste distinctions. In the villages, co-operative societies have an important influence in breaking down ancient social barriers, and political, educational, and economic activities everywhere tend to bring into contact different grades. For practical purposes, therefore, it may be assumed that the strictness of caste feeling is being slowly modified in many directions, and the movement has the sympathy and support of not a few of India's progressive leaders. With the demand by the educated classes for a more democratic system of government we see the emergence of a new factor which has operated to modify the severity of caste distinctions. The problems of caste have for the first time in recent Indian history become a serious political issue. On the one hand the existence of insurmountable social barriers has furnished opponents of political reform in India with a powerful argument. On the other hand, there has been a growing reaction by Hindu politicians of the fact that social exclusiveness is a formidable obstacle to the growth of nationalism in the country. Mr. Gandhi in 1920-21 placed the removal of "untouchability" in the forefront of his programme. Some of his followers have gone even further and advocated the total abolition of the caste system. The passing of resolutions at conferences is a very different thing from translating them into practice; but many who view the prospect in India with sympathy and insight detect signs of a real change coming.

are not, of course, presuming to do more than record our impressions of present conditions as these affect the constitutional problem, and for this purpose criticism and prophecy are equally out of place. The spiritual and social sub-divisions of India, operating in a land where there is a deep respect for religion, and supported by ancient tradition and the canons of orthodoxy, are not likely to suffer very sudden or violent alteration, and nothing is more clear than that whatever change may come, must come from the action of the people of India themselves.

52. A significant development since the War has been a growing consciousness among the intermediate castes in the Hindu system of their natural rights as citizens, and the deep resentment that has been displayed against the political and intellectual domination of the Brahmins in Southern India. In Madras, from the very beginning of the Reforms, the "non-Brahmin" castes organised themselves and secured political power in their own hands. The victory of the "Justice Party," as the non-Brahmin organisation was called, was the victory of numbers, for the Brahmins in Madras form less than 4 per cent. of the Hindu population of the province. But this success was none the less of deep significance, for it indicated that under the new constitution the dominance of the highest caste could be overthrown, even in a place where it had been thought necessary to make express provision for the protection of its rivals. The non-Brahmins in Bombay have never been so well organised or so successful as in Madras, but they have always sent a powerful group to the Legislative Council.

#### **The Depressed Classes.**

53. At the lower end of the complicated scale of castes, and definitely below all others, are found, in every province of India except Burma, very large numbers to whom in recent years the term "Depressed Classes" has been applied. These comprise some 20 per cent. of the total population of British India, or some 30 per cent. of the Hindu population. They constitute the lowest castes recognised as being within the Hindu religious and social system. In origin these castes seem to be partly "functional," comprising those who followed occupations held to be unclean or degrading, such as scavenging or leather working, and partly "tribal," i.e., aboriginal tribes absorbed into the Hindu fold and transformed into an impure caste. Their essential characteristic is that, according to the tenets of orthodox Hinduism, they are, though within the Hindu system, "untouchable,"—that is to say, that for all other Hindus they cause pollution by touch and defile food or water. They are denied access to the interior of an ordinary Hindu temple (though this is also true of some who would not be classed as "untouchable"). They are not only the lowest in the Hindu social and religious system, but with few individual exceptions

in big industrial aggregations. We believe it is not uncommon for a particular shed in a factory to be reserved for depressed class workers, though such separation cannot always be observed.

#### Disabilities of the Untouchables.

54. The actual disabilities, other than religious, suffered by the untouchables owing to their untouchability vary very greatly in different parts of India, not only from province to province, but in different parts of the same province and even sometimes in different parts of the same district. Two most widespread difficulties that arise are in connection with water and schools. It is in many places customary for the untouchables to be denied access to the wells or tanks used by the other castes and great difficulty has often been found, when a new source of water-supply has been provided from public funds by local authorities, in arranging for the untouchables to have use of it. If any village draws its water from a river, the untouchables will be required to take their supply from a different point, lower down. In many places the children of untouchables are either excluded altogether from ordinary schools, although provided in whole or in part from public funds, or else required to sit apart. We have been told of cases in which the untouchable child attends the lesson standing outside the school. An account of the attempts to grapple with this problem on the educational side will be found in the report of our Auxiliary Committee on Education.

The difficulty of the administrator or political reformer is much increased by the fact that the great body of the untouchables, as yet, accept their destiny as natural and inevitable. Their state is indeed pitiable—inside the Hindu fold and yet not of it—living on the edge of starvation, and unaware of any hope of improving their lot.

55. The disabilities of the depressed classes are undoubtedly most severely felt in Madras, and especially in Malabar. In the latter district is still found the phenomenon—now almost unknown elsewhere—of “unapproachability,” that is to say the untouchable must not approach within a certain distance of a high caste Hindu, and would have to leave the road to allow his passage, and even to shout in order to give warning of the risk of pollution. It was stated to us that a local authority in another part of Madras had preferred to leave the roads unmended rather than employ untouchable labourers to repair them. In Bombay and the Central Provinces, the position, though no doubt less acute, is probably more or less comparable to that in Madras. An instance was quoted to us in which, despite an

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order to the effect that members of the depressed classes must be admitted to all Courts, a defendant was afraid to enter a Magistrate's Court for fear of the resentment which such action would arouse. Recent telegrams from Nasik and Poona, in the Bombay Presidency, seem to indicate organised action on the part of some untouchables to assert a claim to enter Hindu temples.

In Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and the United Provinces, although there are large numbers belonging to untouchable castes, in general they do not seem to suffer so universally or so severely as in the South. It would, however, be a mistake to suppose that the problem does not exist in these provinces. We were, for example, told that it was not unknown in Bengal for postmen to refuse themselves to deliver letters to untouchables. In the Punjab, caste differences are much less rigidly observed, and we were informed that the problem of the untouchables could hardly be separated from that of the socially and economically backward. In Assam, also, the difficulty hardly seems to exist as a separate problem; and it is in that province, in which Hinduism is of comparatively recent growth, difficult to distinguish between untouchable Hindus and aboriginals outside the Hindu fold. Among Burmans, caste distinctions hardly exist.

### Is the Condition of Untouchables Improving?

56. Considerable efforts have been made in recent years by social reformers and by Government for the amelioration of the state of the depressed classes, but progress has been, and is likely to remain, slow. Modern changes in the external conditions of daily life are not without effect, but the breaking down of such barriers cannot but be exceedingly gradual. The following remarks in the Bihar and Orissa Census Report of 1921 illustrate the process:

"In places like Jamshedpur where work is done under modern conditions, men of all castes and races work side by side in the mill without any misgivings regarding the caste of their neighbours. But because the facts of every day life make it impossible to follow the same practical rules as were followed a hundred years ago, it is not to be supposed that the distinctions of pure and impure, touchable and untouchable, are no longer observed. A high caste Hindu would not allow an 'untouchable' to sit on the same seat or to smoke the same *hookah* or to touch his person, his seat, his food or the water he drinks; for a breach of this rule a bath in cold water is the minimum purification prescribed. There is much little to show that the rules of touch are falling into disuse except in so far as they have become incompatible with the routine of everyday life. At railway stations no questions are asked with regard to the caste of one's fellow passengers or the railway porters who handle one's baggage, but the man who supplies drinking water to thirsty passengers is still (except in parts of Chota Nagpur) a Brahman."

57. We made careful enquiries as to the extent of the changes which had come about in recent years. Questions on this point addressed to depressed class representatives rarely produced an



admission of any material advance, but our own impression is that there is a slow but real improvement beginning in some areas. It is beyond doubt that there are those among the higher caste Hindus who have laboured zealously in the cause of the depressed classes, and not without effect; the missions have done splendid work in giving them a new dignity and a new hope; and we must mention with admiration the efforts which we saw being made by the Salvation Army for some of the most degraded.

### Estimate of Numbers of Depressed Classes.

58. On the question of the numbers of the depressed classes, conflicting estimates have been made from time to time by various authorities. The variation in the figures arises largely from a difference in the meaning and application given to what is at all times a rather vague term. If the test applied is that of "causing pollution by touch or by the approach within a certain distance", the total will not be the same as if the list included all who are denied access to the interior of ordinary Hindu temples. The criterion of admitting or refusing children to schools would again give a different figure, and indeed the treatment in this respect of members of the same caste would differ in different areas. These considerations must be borne in mind if any question arises of making a list of individuals who belong to the depressed classes, as for example for electoral purposes. But at present we are only concerned to provide the fairest estimate we can of the totals. After studying various figures, and analysing the evidence put before us, we have made the best estimate we can of the numbers of "untouchables" in the first of the above senses. Excluding aboriginals who are definitely outside the Hindu fold the table is as follows:—

	Number in millions.	Approximate percentage of Hindu population.†	Approximate percentage of total population.
Madras ... ..	6.5	18%	15½%
Bombay ... ..	1.5	11%	8%
Bengal ... ..	11.5*	57%	24½%
United Provinces ...	12.0*	31%	26½%
Punjab ... ..	2.8	42%	13½%
Bihar and Orissa...	5.0*	20%	14½%
Central Provinces ...	3.3	33%	24%
Assam ... ..	1.0	24%	13%
Total (Governors' provinces excluding Burma) ... ..	43.6	28½%	19%

\* These figures must be read subject to the warning below.

† Criminal tribes and tribes essentially aboriginal who are only partly Hinduised have, so far as estimates of these are available, been deducted from the figures for the Hindu population.

We must make it plain that the figures in the above table are estimates, and, in respect of some provinces, have in any case less significance than in others. So far as Madras, Bombay and the Central Provinces are concerned, there is not likely to be much dispute as to which are the "untouchable" castes, and no really material differences exist in the various calculations made. But it is otherwise in the case of Bengal, the United Provinces, and Bihar and Orissa. In these three provinces the connection between theoretical untouchability and practical disability is less close, and a special investigation might show that the number of those who are denied equal rights in the matter of schools, water, and the like is less than the total given for the depressed classes in those areas. In Assam the figure is largely conjectural, for in addition to the difficulty of distinguishing between "untouchable" Hindus and aboriginals, there is a good deal of uncertainty as to the proportion of depressed class people to be found among tea-garden labourers. No wide variation for the estimate given for the Punjab has been put forward, but this fact does not necessarily establish the accuracy of the figure.

The conclusion, therefore, is that in provinces where the effects of untouchability are most seriously felt, the figures are likely to be fairly precise; but in other parts of India where the treatment meted out to depressed classes, though constituting a real disability, is not so severe, there is a wide margin of possible error.

## CHAPTER 5.—THE ANGLO-INDIAN COMMUNITY.

59. Paragraph 346 of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report deals with the Anglo-Indian community as follows :—

“Some reference is needed also to the case of the large Anglo-Indian or Eurasian community which on historic grounds has a strong claim on the consideration of the British Government. It is not easy for them, occupying as they do an intermediate position between the races of the East and West, to win for themselves by their own unaided enterprise a secure position in the economy of India. They have been hitherto to a great extent in political and economic dependence on the Government; and they would not be strong enough to withstand the effect of changes which omitted to take account of their peculiar situation. We think the Government must acknowledge, and must be given effective power to discharge, the obligation to see that their interests are not prejudicially affected.”

The events of the twelve years which have elapsed since this passage was written have not diminished the concern of this community for its future, and we warmly sympathise with its anxieties. It was not found possible to include within the Government of India Act any special guarantee of Anglo-Indian interests, and it is admittedly the fact that the problems raised by the difficulties of Anglo-Indians are not so much constitutional as economic. A representative deputation laid their position and grievances before us; and a short account of these must be given here.

60. Anglo-Indians are found in every part of India, but almost entirely among the urban population and very largely in railway and administrative centres. The census of 1921 gave 113,090 as the strength of the community in the whole of India. The figure is probably not very precise, for some who might have been included get classed as Europeans, while there is a tendency for some Indian Christians who have adopted British names to seek inclusion in the Anglo-Indian category. Of the enumerated total, 95,921 live in British India (chiefly in Madras, Bengal, Bombay and Burma), and 17,169 in the States (mainly in Mysore, Travancore, Cochin and Hyderabad).

In the early days of the East India Company many children of mixed marriages were educated in England and returned to India in the Company's service in positions equivalent to those which had been held by their European fathers. Others were educated in India in Anglo-Indian schools, some of which are of old foundation and have fine records. For a long time the usefulness of Anglo-Indians in staffing administrative posts was widely recognised. The community has played an honourable part in developing the country and in supporting the forces of order. These avenues of employment are the more important to it since Anglo-Indians are not cultivators and few of them hold commanding positions in the world of commerce. It is, generally speaking, a poor community; the standards of life it endeavours to maintain make this poverty still more severely felt; it is domiciled in India, and must make India its home: and it

now finds itself, largely as the result of the Reforms and the progress of Indianisation, exposed to the danger of falling between two stools.

Some 1,500 Anglo-Indian women are in the nursing profession. They have given of their best to the tending of the sick of all races, and have thus done something towards meeting one of the foremost and most urgent needs of Indian society.

### **Ambiguity of Status.**

61. An answer given by the Under-Secretary of State for India in the House of Commons in December, 1925, illustrates the ambiguity of Anglo-Indian status. It ran as follows :—

“For the purposes of employment under Government and inclusion in schemes of Indianisation, members of the Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Community are statutory natives of India. For the purposes of education and internal security, their status, in so far as it admits of definition, approximates to that of European British subjects.”

The mention of “statutory natives of India” might seem to suggest a racial test. But this is not so. The reference is to a definition of “natives of India” in the Indian Councils Act of 1870 for the purpose of securing that such persons might be available for official appointments, under certain conditions, without passing the civil service examination. There is brought within this definition “any person born and domiciled within the Dominions of Her Majesty in India of parents habitually resident in India, and not established there for temporary purposes only”. Such a definition is manifestly not limited to persons of mixed blood, and might equally apply to anyone satisfying these tests, whether pure European or pure Indian. The only definition of “Anglo-Indian” of which we are aware does not occur in any statute, but is to be found in the electoral rules in force for Bengal, Madras and Burma—the three provinces where the community’s representation is secured through election by a separate constituency. “Anglo-Indian” is defined in these rules as meaning any resident British subject (not being a pure European) who is of European descent in the male line, or who is of mixed Asiatic and non-Asiatic descent, and whose father, grandfather, or more remote ancestor in the male line was born in the continent of Europe, Canada, Newfoundland, Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, or the United States of America. So far as the community elects its members, exact definition is only required where it is necessary to compile an electoral roll on a communal basis. So much precision is not required when the representative is nominated.

### **Employment in the Public Service.**

62. As we have said, a very large proportion of Anglo-Indian adults are employed in the public service. Almost all of these are connected with central departments. The deputation to which we have referred informed us that about 14,000 Anglo-Indians, together with 3,000 domiciled Europeans, are engaged

on the railways, and that substantial numbers of the community hold posts in the Telegraphs, Customs, Post Office, Survey, and Indian Medical departments. Very few members of the community appear to be employed in the provincial services, though some of them find work in the education departments.

We were told that during the last two years the proportion of Anglo-Indians employed on the railways has tended to fall, while the number of Indian employees has increased. Improved education and lower wages make the latter formidable competitors. To take another example, in the Indian Telegraph department (which up to 1878 was entirely staffed by Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans), the percentage of such employees is stated to have fallen from 66 per cent. in 1902 to 40 per cent. in 1928. In other departments the change is equally marked. The reduction in the public employment of Anglo-Indians may be partly explained by the inclusion of a university degree among the qualifications required of a candidate for a wide range of posts to which Anglo-Indians were formerly admitted without it. But the real cause is to be found in the working out of the policy of increasing Indianisation of the services. Even though Anglo-Indians may be included in schemes of Indianisation, the pressure from more powerful and numerous Indian communities is such that there is an increasing danger of Anglo-Indians being squeezed out.

#### **Anglo-Indian Prospects.**

63. These anxieties found expression in Anglo-Indian deputations which visited England and waited upon successive Secretaries of State in 1923 and 1925. The considered answer contained in the Government of India's letter of September 1928, written after a close investigation of the facts, and after much official consultation, shows clearly how difficult it would be to provide the community with the assurances which it seeks.

As regards the effect of Indianisation, it is clear that Anglo-Indians are eligible for posts set aside for Indians. It is the declared policy of the Government of India to do its best to give the various Indian communities a share in Government service, and this policy is carried out by reserving one-third of the total number of appointments in services administered by the Central Government for qualified members of the minority communities. But the Government of India has never been prepared to set aside any definite percentage of appointments for any particular community; its policy has been restricted to securing that no one community should obtain an undue preponderance, and the distribution of reserved posts among other communities has been a matter of discretion. Inasmuch as the Anglo-Indian community has in times past held an exceptionally large proportion of positions in the central services, it is obvious that with the

advance to general Indianisation its privileged position is in jeopardy. As the Government of India's letter says :—

“It has to be recognised that altered conditions of the country and increased competition from Indians proper must tend to diminish the field of employment of Anglo-Indians in the public service.”

It would be a great relief to the situation if the community could open out for itself a wider range of employment, and depend less completely on government service. Nothing would be more helpful than a rapid advance in Anglo-Indian education, and we hope that the importance of this will be increasingly recognised and provided for. Nobody can consider the difficulties which are inherent in the position of Anglo-Indians without desiring to do the utmost for them. As we have said, their difficulties are economic and social rather than constitutional, and nothing can prevent old traditions being affected by changing circumstances. Such suggestions as we are able to make on the subject will be found in our second volume.

## CHAPTER 6.—THE EUROPEAN IN INDIA.

64. Europeans in India fall mainly into three classes. First, there are the men of business, who, with their families, are found in the principal shipping and trading centres and in other places of organised production, like the tea estates of Assam or Darjeeling or Chota Nagpur, the tea or coffee plantations in the Nilgiris, certain coal fields, or the rubber plantations and oil producing areas of Burma. Secondly, come the British members of the various branches of the Civil Service. These are found in the All-India Services, such as the Indian Civil Service, the Indian Police Service, or the engineering services; and again there are numbers of Europeans engaged upon the railways. Thirdly, there are some 60,000 British troops—officers and men of British regiments serving in India—together with British officers holding commissions in the Indian Army.

We deal elsewhere with the Army in India,\* and with the Civil Service;† though it may be as well to emphasize here how comparatively small is the British element in the latter. In the whole civil administration of British India, from the highest to the lowest grade, the European element is about 12,000 out of a total approaching a million and a half. But this 12,000 includes a large number of British engine-drivers on lines directly managed by Government, a few British police sergeants in some of the largest towns, and other Europeans in subordinate posts. The total British element in the superior grades of the civil service is about 3,500. The services recruited by provincial Governments are almost entirely manned by Indians, apart from a few experts and technicians secured by special contracts. The Education and Agricultural services, for example, as time goes on, may be expected to become completely Indianised so far as the provinces are concerned; such British officers as remain are a survival from the time before 1924, when the general decision was taken, on the recommendation of the Royal Commission on the Superior Civil Services in India (the Lee Commission) that the Secretary of State should no longer recruit on an "All-India" basis for such of the services as were administering subjects which had been transferred to the control of Governors of provinces acting with their Ministers. The intention is that the provincial services should develop and increase gradually, as members of the "All-India Services" cease to become available. Meanwhile the two services will continue to exist side by side as long as there remain any members, whether British or Indian, recruited on an All-India basis for these departments.

To these three main classes of Europeans in India must be added the missionaries of various denominations, a small and devoted band of women engaged in medical and other social work, some retired officials, army officers and planters who have

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\* Part I, ch. 10.

† Part IV, ch. 1.

settled down in hill stations like Ootacamund, and a limited number who carry on in country districts well-organised agricultural production of an exceedingly high standard.

### Numbers.

65. According to the 1921 census, the European population in British India numbered 156,637, of whom 45,000 were women. The adult males not in government service amounted to 21,780.

Small as these numbers are, the part that is played by British enterprise in the commercial life and organisation of India is incalculably great. In Bombay, the bulk of the industrial capital is Indian, and, apart from shipping and allied interests, the British element constitutes a comparatively small fraction of the whole. Most of the textile mills, for example, are Indian owned; though some of these employ British managers or heads of departments. By contrast, the control and direction of a large part of Calcutta business is in English, and still more in Scottish, hands. As a centre of overseas trade, Madras is of much less importance, but here also there is a substantial element which is British. Cawnpore is a most striking example of a great industrial town in the interior with textile and leather industries which have been largely developed by British capital.

The European Association, to which so many of the community belong, was founded nearly fifty years ago, and aims at embodying the general views of Europeans in India, as distinct from particular classes or from special interests represented by various commercial and industrial organisations. The Association has 31 branches scattered throughout India, and has a membership of about 8,000. It takes a leading part in organising the election of European members to the legislatures, and it is one of the most important bodies through which the views of the European community were placed before the Commission.

### European influence.

66. The true significance of the position of the European in India can only be realised by bearing in mind the course of history and the economic development of the country. It is now more than three hundred years since the first British merchants settled in Surat, north of Bombay, and more than two centuries have passed since British traders established themselves in Bengal. The Indian railway system, designed and carried out by British enterprise, has transformed the conditions of Indian commerce. It is British organisation and leadership which have promoted the modern industrial development of India, just as it has been the adoption of political conceptions derived from Britain which has chiefly affected the recent course of Indian politics. There can be few cases in history where so small a body of men has brought about changes so widespread and so fundamental. Yet, while the British connection is continuous and deeply rooted, the British individual is a sojourner,



who, after spending his working years in India, looks forward to retiring to that other country which is his real home. Only a small fraction of those who go out for the purposes of business or employment settle down in India permanently, and the domiciled European community does not grow. The noteworthy fact is that, over areas so vast and amid populations so immense and diverse, the importance of the small European community, by whatever standard this may be measured, is out of all proportion with its size.

### Social Relations.

67. We close this chapter with a reference to the relations prevailing between the European community and its Indian neighbours. We believe that both in politics and in business, there is often personal friendliness and a real mutual respect. We are sure that want of consideration in social intercourse for Indian feelings cannot justly be laid to the charge of the average Englishman in India to-day, and the courtesy of Indians to others is proverbial. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report contains a passage on this delicate topic which we copy here.\*

"The Indian temperament is sensitive and attaches great importance to appearances: it may easily mistake brevity for curtness, and directness for discourtesy. The Englishman often has no natural aptitude for courtliness as India understands it, and values time more highly than the Indian. He has no doubt the defects of his qualities; and yet if he were not what he is he would not have done what he has done. Even with his own people the Englishman is by nature exclusive; he does not disclose his mind to those whom he does not understand; and different habits of thought are a great impediment to understanding. There are thus allowances to be made on both sides. It is perhaps not easy for the successful and unimaginative Englishman to realise what the rule of another race must mean to patriotic minds, and the great obligation that lies upon him to treat with all possible consideration those whom he has hitherto ruled and whom he is now admitting to a share in the task of ruling. Indians on their part would surely do well to reflect on the differences of thought if not of habit that impose inevitable and perfectly healthy limits to intercourse, if each type is to preserve what is best within it; and to think how natural, indeed how necessary, it is that a small and scattered community of European dwellers in an Asiatic country should nurse among themselves a certain communion of their own."

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\* M/C Report, para. 347.

## CHAPTER 7.—THE WOMEN OF INDIA.

68. Except for a mention of the obstacles which social custom sets up in the way of female education, there is hardly any reference in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report to the women of India. It is a striking proof of the change which has come over the Indian scene in the last twelve years that no document discussing India's constitutional system and the directions in which it can be developed and improved could omit the women of India today.

The text of the Government of India Act is as silent as to the political rights of women in India as the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, but the Statute provided that the qualification of electors for the different legislatures which were then being set up should be determined by rules made under the Act. The Franchise Committee, which visited India under the presidency of Lord Southborough, reported early in 1919 that it had received numerous petitions from women of the educated classes urging some form of female suffrage, but it expressed the view (with one dissentient) that the social conditions of India made it premature to extend the franchise to Indian women at that juncture, when so large a proportion of male electors required education in the responsible use of a vote. If this advice had been followed, a beginning could not have been made until now, and the request that Indian women should have some direct opportunity of influencing the course of politics in the land to which they belong would still have remained wholly unsatisfied. But the claim was pressed by the Women's Indian Association and its allies, and the Electoral Rules made under the Act were so drawn as to secure that if any provincial council passed a resolution in favour of removing the sex disqualification, this should become an operative decision; and a corresponding faculty was conferred upon both Houses of the Indian Legislature.

Madras led the way in April, 1921, and all these bodies (except the Council of State) have now passed the necessary resolution. We shall, later on in this Report,\* give figures to show the extremely limited extent to which women, thus enfranchised on the same terms as men, have become qualified as electors.

In seven provinces out of nine, women may now also be members of the legislatures, and women from those provinces can become members of the Legislative Assembly. Already, in several of the provincial councils referred to, a woman member has in fact been nominated; one of these has been unanimously elected by the Madras Legislature as its deputy-president. The women members, we believe, have done useful work as legislators: one of them (the lady just referred to) was responsible for the passage in Madras of the important measure known as the Devadasi Bill, which endeavours to deal with the dedication to temples of girls, most of whom live a life of prostitution.

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\* Part III, Ch. 1., para. 202.

In at least one constituency a woman has stood for election and polled nearly as well as her successful male rival. In municipal elections—in the cities of Madras and Bombay—some women have been returned.

#### Indian Women Reformers.

69. Side by side with these developments there has begun in recent years a strong movement by bodies of educated Indian women, supported by both Indian and British sympathisers, to urge social reforms which would promote the progress of Indian womanhood. For example, the first All-India Women's Educational Conference, with a European as Secretary, met in 1927. The organisers soon discovered that, though the movement had been inspired by the need for educational reform, the social and legal disabilities of Indian women were so closely linked up with educational problems that the scope of the Conference had to be extended to include work touching these subjects, and they now form part of the deliberations of these conferences, which have become an important and influential annual event. Regional meetings of women on similar subjects are being held in many parts of India, and an interesting feature is the absence of any indication of communal friction. The Seva Sadan Society, founded a quarter of a century ago in the Bombay Presidency by Mrs. Ramabai Ranade, is carrying on a great work at many centres with special reference to the training of nurses and midwives, the promotion of maternity and infant welfare, and the finding of employment for widows. Increasing interest is being taken in many places in health centres, and organisations are at work to give some instruction to the untrained *dais* (midwives), who follow their hereditary profession without any knowledge of the principles of aseptic treatment. But the supply of skilled aid for women in sickness is most gravely inadequate to the need. A memorandum placed before the Commission by the "National Association for supplying medical aid by women to the women of India", which manages the Countess of Dufferin's fund, and which formed the Women's Medical Service for India in 1914, states that there are about 400 women doctors working in India with registrable qualifications, of whom 150 are working under missionary societies.

There is an excess of males over females in the population of India amounting, according to the last census, to almost nine millions. The gap is at its widest in the age-groups 10 to 20 and may be not unconnected with social customs and practices such as purdah and early marriage and unskilful midwifery which seriously affect the vitality of so many Indian women. Moreover, among the lower classes, many women often have to undertake physical toil as hard as the work of the men. It will be a matter of great interest and importance to observe whether the increasing attention which is now being given to women's questions, and the emergence of a body of opinion among educated women in India which is determined to improve

the conditions of female life, do not result in an alteration of the figures for the better.

Notwithstanding the good work that is being done in women's hospitals at certain centres, and the organisation of nursing associations, the maternal mortality in India stands at a very high figure. As for infant mortality, the ratio of deaths under one year per thousand births is recorded as 189 (as against a figure of 70 for England and Wales). It is manifest, therefore, that, with the subject of public health entrusted to Indian Ministers in the provinces, the arousing of interest among Indian women themselves to promote improvement in these matters is an event of the greatest importance.

### Purdah and Child Marriage.

70. The interest of educated India has been so much concentrated on purely political issues that the attention now being given to social questions, like those arising out of purdah and early marriage, is the more impressive and significant. Although the leaders in these women's organisations are among the select few, they are helping to bring about a striking change in opinion, and the movement towards reform in questions relating to women is widespread. Their movement is powerfully backed by progressive minds among India's political leaders. The feeling against purdah is fast gaining ground. It is a system\* which has

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\* "From the time they attain puberty, numbers of young girls, Hindu and Muhammadan, often just children in instinct and feeling, retire into seclusion. They see no men except those of their own household; they go out veiled or in closed and curtained conveyances when they do go out at all; and even this degree of liberty is denied them under the stricter Purdah conditions. Purdah, the seclusion of girls who have attained puberty, is a Muhammadan institution more rigidly enforced in north India. In that part of the country it has been frequently adopted by the Hindus, especially in Rajputana. It does not prevail at all among south Indian Hindus; or among the people of Maharashtra and a large section of Gujerat, or in the Madras and Bombay Presidencies. As a result of this, it is less rigid among the poor Muhammadans of south India. Unfortunately there is a tendency, even at the present day, for communities that have not originally adopted Purdah to do so as a mark of growing social status and prosperity. The Kathiawaris, for instance, have adopted it only in the past fifty years; and doctors working among them have already felt the deplorable physical results of this adoption, the increase of tuberculosis and of early maternal mortality.

"Purdah differs very much in the degree of seclusion practised in various parts of the country. At its best and especially among the poor classes, women can move about on the public road and go about their outdoor work with a veil over their faces. If rich, they can use curtained conveyances, and social intercourse of a restricted kind is not denied them. Even under such conditions the system is an infliction on the natural dignity of womanhood, and, on the purely physical side, results still in a deplorable lack of air and exercise that will lead to the physical deterioration of the race. On the other hand, Purdah may be so rigid that a woman may, among the poor, be confined to a small house, practically windowless or with openings high up in the walls, and she may not leave the house even to fetch water for household purposes. However poor the household, she can take no share in the work, except for the cooking which she can do indoors. It has been said that a Rajputani may not leave her house to fetch water though the house may be in a jungle and the well in front of it. The experience of doctors working among these *Purdah nashin* women is a tragic revelation of numberless cases of tuberculosis, stunted growth, and disease, both among the women themselves and their children."—Dr. Rukhmabai, M.D., in "Women in Modern India—Fifteen Papers by Indian Women," p. 145.

pressed least hardly on the very rich who can afford to provide adequate separate space for the ladies of their households; medical reports show how terribly it eats into the vitality of less fortunate women who are shut up with small accommodation. The gathering force of the movement against child marriage is a still more significant symptom, for it has developed in the face of much opposition from the orthodox, and in spite of an ancient tradition widely observed both by Hindus and Muhammadans. The Age of Consent Committee, consisting of nine Indians and one European member, estimated that something like half the girls of India are married before the completion of their fifteenth year; the census of 1921 showed that over two millions of them were married, and 100,000 were widows, before the age of ten. Hence the importance of the Sarda Act just passed by the Indian Legislature. If this law, penalising marriage until the wife is 14 and the husband is 18, is adequately observed and enforced, one of its results will be a great impetus to girls' education. The usefulness of schools largely depends on the value attached by the average parent to the instruction of his children, and as long as the destiny of a little girl is child marriage and the seclusion of purdah, there is no public opinion and no parental ambition to urge that daughters should have the opportunities of good education. Yet these daughters become in the next generation the wives and mothers who determine home standards of life and culture. At the last census in 1921 less than one woman in fifty in British India could read and write, and though the number of girls under instruction has increased by 400,000 in the last ten years, far more has been done for boys' than for girls' education. In no province does one girl out of five attend school; in some provinces not one out of twenty or twenty-five. Even more significant are the figures which show how soon the school-days of many girls are over. Four times as many boys as girls attend primary schools; eighteen times as many boys as girls are found in middle schools; and thirty-four times as many in the high schools. Even in the Punjab, where compulsory education has made most headway, it is not applied to girls. There are less than 2,000 women in arts colleges, while the number of men students is over 64,000.

It would be difficult, therefore, to over-estimate the value of the improvement which may in time be secured by the changing outlook for the women of India. At present the number of trained Indian women in the professions of teaching and nursing are pathetically few, and the obstacles to increasing their number are great. Yet mass education for girls and small children cannot be made effective throughout the villages of India until there is a large supply of qualified women teachers. The amount of unnecessary suffering caused to women by the lack of medical and nursing aid is appalling.

### **The Influence of Indian Women.**

71. The women's movement in India holds the key of progress, and the results it may achieve are incalculably great. It is not too much to say that India cannot reach the position to which it aspires in the world until its women play their due part as educated citizens. We may quote a passage (page 151) from the Review of our Auxiliary Committee on Education, which included among its members an Indian lady of distinguished public service. "The innate intelligence of the Indian woman, her feeling of domestic responsibility, her experience of household management, make her shrewd, penetrating, wise within her own sphere. The social position of the Indian woman needs to be strengthened; for in every country, as power passes more and more from the hands of the few into the hands of the many, more and more is the steadying influence of woman needed as the guardian of family life, not only inside but outside the family circle. In all matters of educational and social reform, the counsel and active work of women are essential both in administration and in public affairs. The education of women, especially in the higher stages, will make available to the country a wealth of capacity that is now largely wasted through lack of opportunity. It is only through education that Indian women will be able to contribute in increasing measure to the culture, the ideals and the activities of the country."

## CHAPTER 8.—THE PROVINCES OF BRITISH INDIA.

72. We think it would be convenient, before entering upon any constitutional description or discussion, to include in this Part of our Report an account of the character of the main areas into which British India is divided. We have had the advantage—which is perhaps an unusual experience even for many of those, both British and Indian, who pass the whole of their working lives in a part of the Indian sub-continent—of having spent some time in visiting every one of the nine Governors' provinces, seeing during a necessarily short stay not only its capital but also what we could of a portion of its countryside. Of the six minor provinces, we have seen something of three (the North-West Frontier Province, Baluchistan, and Delhi Province), and one of our number has also visited a fourth (Coorg). We are, of course, thoroughly aware that, however exceptional this experience may be, a few weeks in each province could not alone give us more than a tourist's impressions. But, even so, it is an experience which gives a background. Against that background, voluminous and detailed written memoranda, both official and non-official, carefully compiled statistics, and the mass of reports resulting from previous investigations or specially prepared for our own inquiry, are more easy to appreciate. Indian conditions are so various, and are so difficult to survey as a whole, that we have thought well to gather together in the following paragraphs some information, elementary and familiar as parts of it may be to many, with reference to the main sub-divisions of the area for which the complicated structure of the Indian constitution has been devised. Some repetition may be involved, but a view of the whole, province by province, may be of advantage.

The eight divisions which are defined in Section 46 (1) of the Government of India Act as "Governors' provinces," together with Burma which was made a Governor's province in 1923, comprise nearly the whole of British India. It is to these provinces that the new system of government has been applied. The remaining territory consists of a number of minor provinces directly under the control of the Central Government, of which the North-West Frontier Province is the most important. The three provinces of Bengal, Madras and Bombay (which were the first, and for many years the only, areas under British administration) are known as Presidencies: their Governors are by custom not members of the Indian Civil Service, as is the case in the other six provinces, but are usually appointed from Britain.

#### The Presidency of Madras.

73. The Province of Madras is officially known as the Presidency of Fort St. George. Its present territory has continued practically unchanged since the fall of Tipu Sultan in 1799. From Cape Comorin, the southernmost point of India, it stretches far

up into the Indian peninsula, comprising an area of over 140,000 square miles and containing a population as large as that of Great Britain. This part of India received some of the earliest trading settlers from Europe, and was the scene of most of the struggles in the 17th and 18th centuries between various European nations for commercial and territorial supremacy. Along its 1,700 miles of coast-line are three ports which are still under French administration, and the ruins of numerous Dutch and Portuguese settlements. Running parallel to the coast on the west is a high range of mountains, the Western Ghats, which in parts attain an elevation of 4,000 to nearly 7,000 feet, while a broken series of hills, very much lower in height, follows the general line of the east coast. In the centre of the peninsula thus enclosed is an undulating plateau, on part of which is the important Indian State of Mysore, while in the extreme south between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea are two other large States, Travancore and Cochin.

The barrier of the Western Ghats largely determines the distribution of rainfall in the province, and hence arise striking differences of climate and of agricultural conditions in its eastern and western divisions. On the west coast, the rainfall is abundant and regular, and failure of crops on account of drought is almost unknown. On the eastern side, except in the valleys and deltas of the rivers which flow eastward across the peninsula, innumerable "tanks" or small reservoirs of water are scattered all over the country and bear testimony to the cultivator's dependence on a precarious rainfall. These unfavourable conditions go to explain why these eastern districts of Madras have for years provided very large numbers of emigrants to other parts. The plantations of Ceylon, Assam, Mysore, the Malay States and the Straits Settlements, and the rice producing districts of Burma are very largely dependent on the Madras Presidency for their supply of agricultural labour.

Rice is the principal food-grain grown in the parts of the province where rainfall is adequate or where modern engineering has insured regular irrigation. Cotton, sugar cane and ground-nut are among the chief industrial crops. Along the coast, and in particular on the banks of the estuaries and lagoons on the west coast, are luxuriant groves of cocoanut and other palms, while in the higher regions of the Western Ghats European enterprise has been responsible for the development of numerous tea, rubber and coffee plantations. Indeed, so important a place do these industries occupy that the large planting community has been given separate representation in the legislative council of the province.

74. Madras may be divided into several areas according to the predominance of particular languages. The principal languages are Tamil and Telugu, which are spoken by 18 and 16 millions respectively. Malayalam is the language of over 3 millions in the Indian States of Travancore and Cochin



and the adjoining British district of Malabar, and Kanarese is spoken in the districts bordering on Mysore and the Bombay Presidency; while in the extreme north-east of the province there are several Oriya-speaking areas. These linguistic differences have during recent years assumed considerable political importance owing to the separatist tendencies which they have fostered. With the movement for linguistic amalgamation we shall have occasion to deal elsewhere. The demand for the formation of an Andhra or Telugu province, which was first put forward seventeen years ago at a conference of Telugu-speaking districts, has been persistent for many years and has now become an important political issue. It has on two occasions during recent years become the subject of a formal debate in the Madras Legislature, which has by fairly large majorities endorsed the proposal for the constitution of a separate Andhra province.

The social cleavages in this province are of no less importance than the linguistic, and they have already exercised a profound influence on the political situation and on the grouping of parties. We shall confine ourselves here to a few statistical details about the principal communities.

Hindus form the bulk of the population, but of the 37½ millions returned in the census as Hindus, some six millions belong to the depressed classes. Muhammadans form less than 7 per cent. of the population. They include the important community of Mappillas (Moplahs) on the west coast, mainly consisting of descendants of Arab sailors and of converts from Hindu outcasts. The fanaticism of the Mappillas, often stimulated by agrarian discontent, has been a frequent source of disturbance to the peace and quiet of the west coast. Christians, thanks largely to the proselytising activities of missionaries who began to come with the Portuguese and other trading settlers, are more numerous in Madras than in any other province of India, though they number less than a million and a half.

#### MADRAS AGENCY AREA.

75. In the north-east of the Presidency is a hilly and unhealthy tract of country lying between the Eastern Ghats and the boundary of the Central Provinces and Orissa (coloured purple in the map of India at the end of this volume) which is excluded from the operation of the Reforms. This is the Madras "Agency area." It falls within the three districts of Ganjam, Vizagapatam and East Godavari whose Collectors administer it, as agents of the Governor in Council, in accordance with a code of regulations prescribed under special laws to suit the primitive character of its inhabitants. These tribes follow their own animistic and tribal faiths. Their country has hitherto remained entirely undeveloped. While not aggressive, they are excitable and easily stirred to resentment against economic oppression or unsuitable administrative measures. The last of

the local rebellions in this area occurred as late as 1922 and was only suppressed two years later with the help of a strong detachment of the Assam Rifles.

The Laccadive Islands and Minicoy, which are inhabited by primitive peoples living in a patriarchal stage of civilisation, are also administered by the Governor in Council of Madras as a "backward tract" in accordance with simple and elastic regulations.

### **The Presidency of Bombay.**

76. The Presidency of Bombay—intermediate in size between Madras and Bengal—has a population of under 20 millions, which is less than half that of either of its sister Presidencies. It is a composite province, even if Sind, added to it as an after-thought, be left out of account. Apart from Sind, its boundaries were settled, almost on the present lines, in 1818 after the third Mahratta war. Its territories include Gujerat, the Mahratta country, and the Karnatak, each with its own prevailing tongue. These are together known as "the Presidency proper," between which and Sind there is interposed an extensive non-British area, including the Kathiawar peninsula, with its extremely numerous Indian States.

East of the line of the Western Ghats stretches the plateau known as the Deccan, at the southern end of which the Karnatak lies. Its inhabitants are racially allied to peoples further south, and particularly to those who speak the same language of Kanarese. Though now content to stay at home and cultivate their land, the Kanarese-speaking people have memories of the ancient Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar and the Kanarese dynasties which preceded it, and take a jealous pride in their distinctive culture.

The Mahrattas are a warrior race. The Brahmins who live in the same country are distinguished both for their practical ability and for their love of learning. Neither Brahmin nor Mahratta has shown any marked aptitude for trade and industry. These two elements in combination attained, shortly before the establishment of British authority, a dominion over the greater part of India, reaching to Cape Comorin in the south and to the gates of Calcutta in the east. The States of Baroda, Gwalior and Indore are among the territories which have to this day remained in Mahratta hands.

From the sea-faring races of the western coast, predominantly Muhammadan in origin, are recruited many of the lascars, who man ships traversing eastern waters. The trading races of Gujerat are known all over India, whether they are Borahs, Khojas, Baniyas, Bhattias or Jains. The Parsis, whose homes are now predominantly in Bombay City, are another famous commercial community established in the same area. It is principally men of these races who have co-operated with the European to a degree unexampled elsewhere to make of Bombay

a city of Indian wealth and culture. Indian finance and enterprise, centred in Bombay, are chiefly responsible not only for the three great hydro-electric works which supply power from the Western Ghats to the city, and for the majority of the textile mills of the Presidency, but for undertakings as far afield as the ironworks of Jamshedpur in the Province of Bihar and Orissa and the cotton factories of Nagpur in the Central Provinces. In projects of this magnitude, the Parsis—who took early advantage of western education and first became famous in industry as builders of teak ships—still predominate. Nowadays in Bombay Gujarathis compete with Europeans in banking, insurance, trade and finance of all kinds. The rise to wealth of men of these races is, however, recent; possessions are in the hands of a few; and the relations between the industrial and the manual workers have been marked by constant and disastrous strikes.

In no province of India is there so large a proportion of urban dwellers as in the Presidency of Bombay. Bombay City, with its 1,200,000 inhabitants, is nearly as big as Calcutta and is the third city in the Empire. A natural cleavage of interest exists between it and the rest of the Presidency and especially between it and the rural areas. But such is the financial and intellectual dominance of the city that it can well hold its own. We shall have to point out hereafter how the taxation of trading profits is a source of income to the Central Government while the cultivator, rich and poor alike, pays to the province the land revenue which forms a large part of the common funds drawn upon for the needs both of city and countryside.

#### SIND.

77. Completely separated from the "Presidency proper" by a wedge of non-British territory, is Sind—an area of nearly 50,000 square miles with a population of over three millions. The ordinary method by which, whether for the purposes of business or government, one passes between Bombay and Karachi, the port of Sind, is by sea. Railway communication involves a long detour, usually via Lahore.

The physical detachment of what has always been known, since its conquest by Napier in 1842, as the "Province of Sind" from the remainder of the Bombay Presidency is emphasised by the vastly different character of the country and its people. The "Presidency proper" receives the full brunt of the monsoon and is largely a land of mountain and forest. But for the Indus, Sind would be entirely desert. The Presidency, apart from Sind, is predominantly Hindu; before the British came its Mahratta fighting men were a bulwark against the Moslem invaders; whereas three-quarters of the inhabitants of Sind are Muhammadan. In its life and civilisation Sind is more closely allied to Iraq or Arabia than to India.

These differences are reflected in the administrative system applied to the two areas. Sind constitutes one separate administrative "division"; and the Presidency proper—excluding Bombay City and its suburbs—comprises three. But the Commissioner in Sind (the preposition is significant) enjoys a status and authority much greater than the Commissioners of the other three divisions. His residence in Karachi is known as Government House, and he is in charge not only of the revenue administration (which naturally differs greatly from the system in the rest of the Presidency and leaves the Commissioner very large discretion) but of many departments such as Police and Excise which elsewhere in the Presidency look to their own departmental heads—the Inspector General of Police and the Commissioner of Excise. Similarly, in judicial matters the High Court of Bombay has no jurisdiction in Sind. The Court of the Judicial Commissioner of Sind is the highest court in Sind province, with appeal direct to the Privy Council, and it is proposed, as soon as finances permit, to convert the Judicial Commissioner's court into a Chief Court. There is no separation of finances, of course, between the two parts of the Presidency; both return members to the same legislature which holds its sessions at Bombay and Poona, and both areas draw their higher officers from a common source. Yet so distinctive is the character of Sind and so exacting its climate that the choice of personnel which this makes possible is none too large. It is difficult to see how, on the administrative side, dissociation could go much further without separation. There is, among the Hindu minority in Sind, a feeling that the independence of the Commissioner is too great, while on the Muhammadan side there is the well-known cry for separation from Bombay. This demand has gathered strength not so much in the homes of the people, or among the Muhammadan cultivators of Sind, as among leaders of Muhammadan thought all over India, to whom the idea of a new Moslem province, contiguous to the predominantly Moslem areas of Baluchistan, the North-West Frontier Province and the Punjab, naturally appeals as offering a stronghold against the fear of Hindu domination. We shall make some reference to this controversy in our second volume.

Sind is small in wealth and population. The rapid growth in the import and export trade of Karachi (the third maritime port of India, if Rangoon be excluded, and now the principal air port), does not greatly affect the prosperity of the province as a whole. But great promise of growth is held out for the future. A capital sum of sixteen million pounds is being sunk in the "Sukkur Barrage and Canals Construction" now in course of completion on the Indus, at a point some four hundred miles from the sea. It is expected that the cultivated area of the province will be raised from two and a quarter million acres to nearly six million acres, and an assured water supply substituted for a scanty and precarious one.

The dimensions of this undertaking and its seven canals, several of them broader than the Suez Canal and very much longer, are stupendous. The plan provides that irrigation will begin in two years from now; the works are to be completed in 1934; and it is calculated that a profit should be realised, over and above the fixed interest on the capital sum invested, by 1946. Of course this great transformation of Sind does not end with the completion of the barrage and its canals; the increased production of crops would be nearly useless without new railways and new roads: and there is no branch of the administration which will not require great expansion. The question of the separation of Sind is, therefore, being raised at a moment when an enormous outlay of capital borrowed on the credit of the Government of India is not yet earning revenue, and when problems of administration and readjustment on the largest scale have to be faced.

#### **The Presidency of Bengal.**

78. Bengal is the political unit of British India which has experienced more changes of boundary than any other. Originally known as the Presidency of Fort William in Bengal, it acquired by Lord North's Regulating Act of 1773 a primacy over the other Presidencies. Calcutta remained the capital of India till this was transferred to Delhi in 1911; and the Supreme Court of Bengal remains to this day in a special position in relation to the Government of India. At different times, the Bengal Presidency has included Bihar, Orissa, Assam and Agra.

Lord Curzon's proposal for the partition of Bengal by separating from it Eastern Bengal and creating a new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam, with Dacca as its capital, was put into operation in 1905, but the decision was reversed in 1911, when the Chief Commissionership of Assam was restored, and the new province of Bihar and Orissa carved out.

The present shape of the Presidency of Bengal is the result of these rearrangements. It is now the smallest in area of the Governors' provinces except Assam, but has more inhabitants than any other province, and the average density of its population of  $46\frac{1}{2}$  millions slightly exceeds that of Great Britain. It is physically a more homogeneous unit than any other Governor's province. Excluding the comparatively small and sparsely populated hill areas of Darjeeling on the north and Tripura State and Chittagong on the east, the province—which may be roughly described as made up of the combined deltas of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra—is a fertile alluvial plain low lying and intersected in the southern portion by a maze of rivers and creeks. In parts of Eastern Bengal during the rains communication is possible only by boat. The Sundarbans, bordering the mouths of the Ganges, are a region of swamps and stunted forests.

Racially and linguistically, no less than geographically, Bengal is more homogeneous than the other great areas of India.

Though religious and cultural differences make it no less difficult in Bengal than elsewhere for Hindus and Muhammadans to unite socially or politically, it is generally held that only a small proportion of the Muhammadans of Bengal are descended from foreign Moslem invaders. Their ancestors were largely converts from Hinduism.

Roughly speaking the Muhammadans are concentrated in the east, and the Hindus in the west of the Presidency. But even in Eastern Bengal, the town population is largely Hindu. Among the landlords Hindus predominate. The Muhammadans are markedly more backward educationally, and on the average are also economically below the standard of the Hindus, as is illustrated by the fact that though they form a clear majority of the population (54.6 per cent.) they are in a minority (45.1 per cent.) among the voters in the general constituencies. Eastern Bengal comprises the most fertile and also the most thickly populated districts. There are some rural areas with over a thousand inhabitants to the square mile. In central Bengal deltaic action is ceasing and the population has, on the whole, been stationary. Eastern and central Bengal comprise the main jute-producing areas, not only of Bengal but of the world; for jute is practically a Bengal monopoly. The jute industry is less than 80 years old and its progress is most remarkable. The first mill was started in 1855 and the first power loom in 1859. By 1909 the out-turn was 2,500 tons a day, and it is now 4,000 tons. The value of exported jute manufactures has increased thirtyfold in forty years. In the northern parts of Bengal, such as Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri, lie important tea districts; and in the west of the Burdwan division is a coal producing area.

An important factor in the economic life of Bengal is the "permanent settlement" of the land revenue. We defer an account of this till Chapter 2 of Part V of this volume.

#### CALCUTTA.

79. The City of Calcutta, with a population, including its suburbs, of about 1,300,000, is in one sense an exotic, for it owes its origin as a great city to commercial enterprise in which the Bengalis have played little part. Even to-day the great jute mills on its outskirts are mainly controlled by Europeans, and the bulk of the Indian labour employed in them comes from outside the province. The Bengali generally has not taken to factory or mill work; he leaves that almost entirely to the Oriya and up-country coolie or artisan. At the same time, Calcutta has become a great Hindu intellectual and political centre; with its newspapers and its enormous university, it exercises a profound influence over the views of the province—an influence which naturally does not stop at its boundaries. The quick and receptive mind of the Bengali readily absorbs education of a westernised type, and a problem of great perplexity is presented by those of the Hindu middle class (or more correctly Hindu *bhadralog*) who, often at great sacrifice,

have been trained for clerical and professional careers in numbers enormously in excess of the amount of work of this type which is available. It is not surprising that many of them turn for an outlet to the political arena deeply imbued with hostility to the present régime.

The dominance of Calcutta is so great that it is well to recall that, outside it, only 4 per cent. of the population of Bengal is urban. Dacca, the only other city, has about 120,000 inhabitants. Only two other towns have as many as 50,000. Except for those who live in the headquarters town of a district, or at a railway or steamer junction or terminus, the bulk of the population lives in agricultural villages—no fewer than twelve millions of people are distributed in 59,000 hamlets of fewer than 500 inhabitants each.

A problem confronting Bengal, which is no less important and no less difficult than any question of its political future, is the scourge of malaria. Malaria is endemic in many other parts of India besides Bengal, but probably nowhere else are its ravages on such a widespread scale. It is hardly possible to over-estimate its effects in lowering the vitality of the population. Though this subject is outside our own sphere, we must call attention to the study "Malaria and Agriculture in Bengal" published in 1925 by the Director of Public Health of the province.

#### BACKWARD TRACTS OF BENGAL.

80. On the extreme north of the Presidency bordering upon Nepal and Sikkim, and again at its south-eastern extremity marching with Assam and Burma, lies a "backward tract"—the Darjeeling district and the Chittagong Hill Tracts respectively. These areas are under special administrative arrangements and are not within the full operation of the provincial Reforms. Part of the Darjeeling district lies in the plains with a population mainly Bengali; the remainder is in the Himalayas, rising at one corner to 12,000 feet, and contains numerous hill-tribes with religion, customs, and language quite distinct from the rest of Bengal.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts consist of parallel ranges of hills largely covered by virgin forest. Only a tenth of the area is cultivated. A piece of forest is cleared and burned, and when the rains soften the ground the crops are sown. As soon as the fertilising effect of the ashes has passed away, the process is repeated in a fresh area. The population is about 170,000 and the people are as primitive as their agricultural methods.

#### The United Provinces of Agra and Oudh.

81. The two Provinces of Agra and of Oudh, which are now combined in a single Governor's Province, had a diverse origin. Agra was part of the old Presidency of Fort William (i.e., Bengal) till 1834, when it became a separate administration.

Oudh was annexed in 1856, and remained a separate administration until 1877, when it came under the same charge as Agra. In 1902 the combined area became known as the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh under a Lieutenant-Governor, and in 1921 they were constituted a Governor's Province. The Agra sub-province is much the larger of the two, and contains 36 out of the 48 districts into which the United Provinces is divided.

The province stretches between Bihar on the east and Delhi and the Punjab on the west, and from Nepal and the Himalayas on the north to the low ranges of Central India on the south. The greater part of the province consists of the fertile and densely populated plain of the Ganges and of its tributaries the Jumna and the Gogra. The density ranges from 512 persons per square mile in the west to 718 in the east. The total population, like the total area, is not far short of that of the British Isles.

Set in the centre of Northern India, this is perhaps the most typically Indian of all the provinces. The great mass of the population are peasants tilling the soil in their ancestral villages, with few interests outside the round of village life. Only 10 per cent. live in towns, though seven of these towns have a population exceeding 100,000. The most important industrial centre is Cawnpore (population 216,000), with its textile mills and tanneries. But no province has a more distinguished list of towns of historic or religious interest. Agra rivalled Delhi and Lahore as a centre of the Mogul Empire; Lucknow contains the palaces of the old rulers of Oudh; and cities like Benares, Hardwar, Ajodhia, Allahabad and Muttra attract year by year a multitude of pilgrims to the sacred places of their faith. The United Provinces contains four universities—Benares, Aligarh, Lucknow, and Agra.

Racially the population of the province is in the main homogeneous. A peasant on the Bihar border differs no doubt in many ways from one close to the Delhi Province, but there is no abrupt change of type and culture, and there is nothing corresponding to the contrasting races that are combined under one administration in a province like Bihar and Orissa. On the other hand, there are communal differences that are all the more serious because in northern provinces like the United Provinces and the Punjab, the more virile races resort more readily to violent methods for resolving their differences. The Muhammadan population is no more than 14 per cent. of the whole, but it is concentrated in the towns, where 37 per cent. of the population is Muhammadan. For this and other reasons the power and influence of the Moslem community in the province cannot be measured simply by its numerical proportions.

The provincial Government reports that the province is backward in mass education. "The test of literacy at the last census was the simple one of ability to write a letter to a friend and to read the answer. Even so, only 3.7 per cent. of the total



population were returned as literate, only 6·5 per cent. of the male population, and only 9 per cent. of that portion of the population which was twenty years of age or over. Among females only six in every thousand satisfied the test. These figures show how little the people are able to avail themselves even of such means as there are of acquiring information as to what is going on in the world outside their own immediate neighbourhood.”\*

#### THE GREAT LANDHOLDERS.

82. A noteworthy feature of the social organisation of the province is the number of great landholders. Whereas the Punjab is a province of peasant proprietors, the land in the United Provinces, and in particular in Oudh, is held from Government by a relatively small number of individuals. The estates of these “ Taluqdars ” of Oudh number no more than 260, but they comprise two-thirds of the area of Oudh, and pay about one-sixth of the land revenue of the United Provinces. Some of the Taluqdars represent the old conquering Rajput families with an ancestry dating back to the 9th century. In the chronic anarchy which marked the closing stages of the Kingdom of Oudh, the larger Taluqdars occupied a position which at times amounted to virtual independence, and their disputes with the Court and its agents over the payment of revenue contributed to the atmosphere of misrule which finally led to the annexation of Oudh in 1856. The most powerful of the Taluqdars own hundreds of villages and enjoy very large incomes. Their wealth, their social status, and the control they exercise over their tenants give these “ Barons of Oudh ” a position of very great influence in their area. They comprise members of both the major communities, and their common interests cut across the communal divisions.

The Zemindars of the Agra province also form a landed aristocracy of special importance. They were at one time less well organised than the Taluqdars of Oudh, who have gained cohesion by their membership of the British Indian Association, and have magnificent headquarters in the Kaiserbagh at Lucknow. Government collects from the Taluqdars a cess, half of which goes to the Association and half to educational institutions for their families. But the Zemindars of Agra now have their Association, also, with headquarters at Allahabad.

Agrarian questions have from time to time presented difficult problems for the Government of the province. Up to 1921 the tenants of the great landholders in Oudh had no security of tenure beyond a seven years' period, and had to pay very large premiums to secure renewal. Agrarian trouble on a large scale was threatened, and in 1921 an Act was passed securing a life tenure for the tenant. In Agra the position of the tenant was more favourable, and agrarian agitation was never so serious

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\* See Volume IX, p. 2, Memorandum of the United Provinces Government.

as in Oudh; but here, too, the opposing interests of landlord and tenant offer serious difficulties for the Government and the Legislature.

### **The Punjab.**

83. The Punjab was the last of the Governors' provinces of India proper to come under British control. Together with the North-West Frontier Province, which was not separated from it until Lord Curzon's decision of 1901, it has always borne the brunt of attacks made upon India through the defiles of the North West. Little more than a hundred years ago, the Afghans not only held Peshawar, but penetrated across the Indus to Multan, and it was only the rising strength of the Sikh confederation under Ranjit Singh that drove them out of the western areas of the present province and back through the passes.

The province occupies the great north-western plain of India through which the main tributaries of the Upper Indus flow. These are the Sutlej, the Beas, the Ravi, the Chenab and the Jhelum—the five rivers which give the province its name. It extends from the Himalayas in the north to the desert country of Rajputana in the south, and from the Upper Ganges Valley on the east to the Indus on the west. There is one trans-Indus district. The province is completely landlocked and the main outlet for its produce is the port of Karachi in Sind, about 750 miles distant by rail from Lahore, the capital of the province, and one of the most important railway junctions in India.

The northern submontane tracts have a good rainfall and are thickly populated, but as the southern desert is approached, the natural conditions of the province deteriorate. Between the great rivers are tracts which, if left to themselves, would be arid scrub-covered country incapable of supporting more than a few nomads. But the efforts of a succession of great engineers have changed all this. The surplus waters of the rivers, which are fed from the snows of the Himalayas, have been diverted by a wonderful system of canals, and now irrigate great tracts that were formerly barren. The "canal colonies" created in this way rival in prosperity the northern districts blessed by better natural conditions. They are indeed the most prosperous areas in the province, and the trend of surplus rural population is towards these colonies and not to the towns. Irrigation has changed the Punjab from a poor province, exposed to recurring famines, into one of the most prosperous and progressive provinces in India.

In area the Punjab is a little larger than Great Britain and its population at the census of 1921 was over 20 millions. There are only two towns with a population of more than 100,000, Lahore and Amritsar. At least 90 per cent. of the total population lives in villages and 60 per cent. is supported by agriculture. It is a country of peasant proprietors; there are, it is true, a

considerable number of small landlords living on the rent of their lands, but the large landowner of the type common in the United Provinces and elsewhere in India is rare.

#### AGRICULTURAL TRIBES.

84. The special position secured to what are known as "agricultural tribes" is a notable feature in the social economy of the province. The Punjab Land Alienation Act prevents the sale, or mortgage (except under strict conditions) of land by a member of such a tribe to anyone who is not a member of the same group of agricultural tribes in the same district. The object of the Act was, we understand, to protect tribal groups who cultivated land as their main occupation from the alienation of their land to the monied and urban classes. The importance of its operation will be better understood if we point out that large classes of Hindus are not included in the schedule of agricultural tribes. The Act has had the effect of creating among the rural classes a strong sense of common interest which to some extent cuts across communal divisions. It has been estimated that the agricultural tribes amount to about half the total population and to five-sixths of the population supported by agriculture. They are not confined to one community—for example, the Jats, the most important of the agricultural tribes, is made up of  $2\frac{1}{4}$  million Muhammadans,  $1\frac{1}{4}$  million Sikhs and 1 million Hindus.

#### COMMUNAL DISTRIBUTION.

85. The distribution of the population by religions is noteworthy because of its bearing on the communal question, which is acute in the province. Of the total of  $20\frac{1}{2}$  millions,  $11\frac{1}{2}$  are Muhammadans,  $6\frac{1}{2}$  Hindus and  $2\frac{1}{4}$  Sikhs. Throughout the western districts the Muhammadans are in a majority; indeed, in the border districts adjoining the predominantly Muhammadan area of the North-West Frontier Province, Muhammadans make up 80 per cent. of the population. The south-eastern area adjoining the United Provinces shows a Hindu majority of at least 60 per cent. The main Sikh concentration is in the central Punjab. This was the centre of the Sikh power which held the Punjab before the British occupation in the middle of the last century. An important group of States under Sikh rulers adjoins the British territory of the province.

The problem of caste is happily of less importance in the Punjab than in some other provinces. The Punjab Government in its Memorandum prepared for the Commission, put the position thus\*:

"No one would desire to underrate the esteem with which certain Brahman families are regarded who have for generations served the administration under Mughal, Sikh and British rule, nor the respect bestowed on many learned men of this body; and in the ceremonies which attend all the

\* Printed at pp. 7 and 8 of Volume X.

important occasions of a Hindu's life the Brahman has a well-defined part. Nevertheless it is strictly true to say that the Brahmans of the Punjab do not as such exert any greater political influence than, for instance, that wielded by the Khattris, the Hindu trading and professional community of the Central Punjab; and to speak of a non-Brahman party in the Punjab would have as little meaning as to talk of an ultra-montane party in England. Not only is it the case that the Brahman has no practical pre-eminence among Hindus, but as between 'caste' and 'non-caste' Hindus the distinction is not so strongly marked as to create the political problems found elsewhere in India. It is difficult indeed to determine from the census tables the exact numbers of those who though for census or voting purposes described as Hindus, yet fall so far short of the full status of Hindu as not ordinarily to be admitted to Hindu temples. The census of 1911 calculated that out of the total of 8,773,000 Hindus, some 2,268,000 might be technically regarded as belonging to untouchable castes; but untouchability was merely held to mean that food touched by them could not be eaten by high caste Hindus; it was only in the case of actual scavengers that bodily contact involved pollution. Access to the richer Hindu temples was closed to all the persons included in the figure given; minor temples were not closed to them; and in other respects there was a great variation in the degree of liberty given in social intercourse."

The religions of the Muhammadans and the Sikhs, who together form two-thirds of the population, do not recognise caste and within the Hindu community of the Punjab the pre-eminence of the higher castes is much less marked than elsewhere. The leather worker in the Punjab who seeks another occupation can quite definitely raise himself in the social scale. There are classes which are socially depressed on account of their occupation, but the political problem presented elsewhere by impassable caste divisions hardly exists.

#### MILITARY RECRUITMENT.

86. The sturdy and enterprising Punjabi has less aversion from emigration than the other Indian races and he is to be found in many parts of the East as soldier or policeman or settler. The Punjab is at all times pre-eminently the military recruiting ground of India. The number of Punjabis joining the colours in the War was so great that one man in 28 was mobilized and this single province provided a third of the whole contribution of India to the forces of the Empire.†

The enterprise of the Punjabi in peace and war has not been without effect upon his outlook. The sepoys who came to Europe with the Indian divisions at the outbreak of war saw the villages, the market places, the schools and the agriculture of the West and many of them returned to their homes with a new conception of what a rural community might be.

#### BACKWARD TRACTS.

In the north-east of the province, between Kashmir and the Simla hill States, lie the Himalayan valleys of Lahaul and Spiti. They are separated from the Punjab by high passes which admit of travel only in summer and contain a purely Tibetan population. They present no administrative problems and

† See below, p. 96.

their local affairs are satisfactorily transacted under a patriarchal dispensation. To preserve this simple form of administration these areas have been notified as "backward tracts" and excluded from the Reforms.

### **Bihar and Orissa.**

87. The province of Bihar and Orissa, which was constituted in 1912, is the most artificial unit of all the Indian provinces. It was formed by bringing under a single administration three areas which differ markedly, not only in physical features, but in many racial, linguistic, and cultural characteristics.

Bihar, in the north, consists of an alluvial plain drained by the Ganges and its tributaries. It contains more than half the total population of the province, with Patna (120,000 inhabitants), the headquarters of the provincial Government, as its capital. Other large towns are Bhagalpur (69,000) and Gaya (68,000)—the latter an important centre of Hindu pilgrimage, with a famous shrine associated with events in the life of Buddha near by. Bihar bears a close resemblance from some points of view to western Bengal, and it had formed part of Bengal almost from the beginning of British administration until the final rearrangement in 1912. The bulk of the population is Hindu, and Hinduism has long ago absorbed such of the aboriginal races of that area as did not retire into the jungles. Hence arises part of the difficulty in determining what is the proper figure to give for the depressed classes in the province. The preponderance of rural over urban dwellers is very marked. There are practically no minerals in Bihar, and few large-scale industries; the indigo factories have ceased to be of much importance, though their place has been taken to some extent by sugar factories and rice mills.

At the other end of the province, in the south, and completely separated from Bihar by the Chota Nagpur plateau, lie the three coastal districts of Orissa. Though Orissa stretches along the Bay of Bengal for some three hundred miles, it has no port of any consequence. The tract is made up of the deltas of a number of large rivers, and agriculture suffers greatly from periodic floods. Its urban population, which is relatively more important than in the case of north Bihar or Chota Nagpur, is mostly concentrated in the two towns of Cuttack and Puri; the latter supports its population mainly by catering for pilgrims to the Jagannath temple, and for visitors who come to it as a health resort. The population of Orissa is almost entirely Hindu, Muhammadans accounting for less than 3 per cent. of the inhabitants. But whereas in Bihar Hindi or Urdu is practically the universal language, 96 per cent. of the population of Orissa speak Oriya. This Hindu holy land is the home of the Oriya race. Apart from spreading into a portion of adjoining Madras territory, the Oriya-speaking people have penetrated into a hinterland somewhat similar in character to the Chota

Nagpur plateau. The greater part of this hinterland is not British territory, but is held by the Orissa feudatory States. How artificial the union of Orissa with Bihar really is may be illustrated by the fact that the deputation from Orissa, which attended the Commission at Patna, made the journey by travelling via Calcutta. It is noteworthy that the great railway systems which connect Calcutta with the west and the south both pass through the province of Bihar and Orissa, but there is no convenient direct route between the northern and southern portions of the province.

Between Bihar on the north and Orissa on the south lies Chota Nagpur, with Ranchi as its principal town. It is a tableland rising to about 3,000 feet, with wooded hills and open uplands intersected by rich valleys. About half of its population consists of aboriginal and semi-aboriginal tribes. There is great variety in the languages spoken in the area; 30 per cent. of the population use Hindi, and about the same number Oriya, while in certain districts the prevailing tongue is one or other of the Munda or the Dravidian languages. The Chota Nagpur plateau, especially on its eastern side, is rich in minerals. It contains the most important coalfield in India, round Jharua, and at Jamshedpur are the great Tata iron and steel works, employing tens of thousands of men. The greater part of the unskilled labour at the industrial centres is drawn from the local aboriginal tribes, who also form an important recruiting ground for labour on tea estates in Assam. There are also tea gardens in the neighbourhood of Ranchi.

#### EXCLUDED AREAS OF BIHAR AND ORISSA.

88. If reference be made to the map of India at the end of this volume, it will be seen that a large proportion of this province as also of Assam and Burma is coloured purple as being "excluded" from the Reforms. The degree of exclusion of the various backward tracts in Bihar and Orissa is not uniform, the differences being due to the varying estimates formed of the degree of backwardness of the inhabitants. We shall have to describe in a later chapter the special systems of administration and legislation applied to these backward tracts; here we are only concerned to identify them and to indicate the features which make special treatment necessary. Owing to their large aboriginal population, the five districts of Chota Nagpur, together with the districts known as the Santal Parganas and Sambalpur, are partially excluded from the Reforms, and the district of Angul is wholly outside them. These backward races are commonly supposed to be remnants of pre-Aryan autochthonous peoples into whose strongholds in the hills and forests the invader found it difficult and unprofitable to penetrate. Some of them live by hunting, and by a type of shifting cultivation which we have described in writing of the backward tract of Chittagong in Bengal. In the valleys, the tribes have with great labour terraced isolated fields, producing abundant crops,

but at no time before the establishment of British rule were these plots coveted by the plainsman, for he could not have collected his rents from the occupiers. But the moneylender and the trader took advantage of the new reign of law to reduce the aboriginal owners to practical serfdom. We must refer for further details to the Memorandum on Backward Tracts prepared for us by the Bihar and Orissa Government.\* The need for special provision and special protection is brought out in the following extract :—

“They cannot compete against the subtler minds of the Aryan races that have in the past two or three centuries penetrated slowly into the country ; their improvidence lays them open to the wiles of the moneylender ; their lack of education and their distinctive languages place them at a great disadvantage in the Courts. When roused to action by real or fancied grievances their tribal organisation, where it survives, and elsewhere the solidarity of kinship make for a rapid spread of disaffection, while their childlike outlook makes the duty of restoring order a peculiarly distasteful one.”

The most notable of such outbreaks in this province was the Santal rebellion of 1855. The application of the ordinary laws of Bengal had resulted in the aboriginals losing their lands to their creditors. The Santals organised a large body to march to Calcutta to present their grievances ; their advance was marked by looting and violence, and a large punitive force was required to restore order. After the rebellion, the district was excluded from the operation of the general regulations, and received its own agrarian law and a distinct judicial system. These measures have not sufficed entirely to stop the penetration of the intruder, and in that part of the district which adjoins Bengal there is a considerable settlement of Bengalis who press for the removal of the barriers which have been set up to prevent exploitation of the aboriginals.

The district of Angul, which contains an aboriginal population of 74 per cent., lies in the midst of the Orissa States. The district came late into British hands, and from the first has received a distinctive system of administration.

The problem presented by the aboriginals of the Chota Nagpur plateau, which formed part of the inaccessible forest tract which the Aryan invaders called the “ Jarkhand,” is essentially similar. These primitive tribes amount to 58 per cent. of the population, and they nurse a resentment against the Hindu immigrants who, as they consider, have robbed them of their ancestral lands. Unrest, usually arising from agrarian causes but often assuming a religious complexion, is still endemic. It has occasionally led to the employment of regular troops. Christianity has made much progress among them, and we are greatly indebted for our information about this country to the representatives of the three important missions,—Anglican,

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\* Printed at p. 332 onwards of Volume XII.

Roman, and Lutheran—who gave evidence before the Joint Conference. Between them these three missions claim 280,000 converts, drawn almost entirely from the aboriginal population, in the Ranchi district alone. The missions have made some inroads on the illiteracy of the aboriginals. The present position would seem to be that the protective measures taken, though by no means adequate in the eyes of many of those who know the aboriginal best, have given him a breathing space and stemmed the tide of exploitation, but that the constructive work of so educating him as to enable him to stand on his own feet has scarcely begun. He remains credulous and excitable, and almost as much as ever in need of special protection.

### The Central Provinces.

89. The Central Provinces were constituted a separate province under that name in 1861. From 1903 till 1920 they were governed by a Chief Commissioner, and in the latter year became a Governor's province. In 1903 Berar, transferred by the Nizam to the British Government in perpetual lease, was added to the Chief Commissioner's charge. The Governor-General in Council is empowered by an Order in Council issued under the Foreign Jurisdiction Act, to apply to Berar any portion of the laws of British India. But the territory of Berar remains State territory; the Government of India Act has no operation within its boundaries. As a consequence, special constitutional arrangements have been made to fit it into a Governor's province. And the assimilation of methods of administration over the whole province has been carried so far that this difference would not be apparent to the ordinary citizen.

The Central Provinces with Berar form as it were an island, landlocked by Indian States. Of the total boundary, 2,780 miles long, only discontinuous strips totalling 340 miles march with British territory. Geographically, the whole area divides into a British and a non-British portion; linguistically, it is distributed between a Marathi-speaking and a Hindi-speaking population. The two lines of division do not coincide. In the whole of Berar and the districts of the Nagpur division the prevailing tongue is Marathi; in the remaining 14 districts of the province it is Hindi. The whole province is almost purely agricultural, and the soil of the plains in the Marathi area is of the rich "black cotton" kind. In this Marathi area lie the capital of the province, Nagpur, and a number of important cotton mills.

The Hindi area contains both wheat-producing plains and extensive hills and forests, and embraces a number of feudatory States. There are numerous hill tribes, of which the principal are the Gonds, many of whom still retain their own language and their own animistic religion. Of the population, 11 millions are in British territory, two millions in the feudatory States, and three millions in Berar—but the feudatory States



are nearly twice as large, and the British territory nearly five times as large, as Berar. In the whole province, the Hindi-speakers are 56 per cent., the Marathi-speakers 31 per cent. and the Gondi-speakers 7 per cent. of the population. The Mahrattas were the rulers of the whole country before the British came: the Marathi-speaking population not only holds the best land, but in spite of its inferiority in numbers contends on level terms with the Hindi element. In the Council, the eight Marathi districts return 25 members and the 14 Hindi districts 23, and it is only in the Marathi area that the cultivating classes offer any challenge to that predominance of the higher castes, which is characteristic of the undeveloped areas of India.

#### SPECIAL POSITION OF BERAR.

90. The anomalous position of Berar, as non-British territory over which legislation and administration deriving authority from British India nevertheless prevail, makes it convenient to depart from the general arrangement of our Report and to anticipate a later chapter by giving here some constitutional information.

Berar is represented in the Central Provinces Legislature by 17 of the 55 elected members. Since the Government of India Act does not apply to Berar, the constitutional difficulty is overcome by the formal nomination by the Governor of the candidates who are successful at the Berar elections. A corresponding device is employed in respect of the member whom Berar sends to the Council of State and the member whom it sends to the Assembly. Bills which become Acts on passing through all their stages in the Central Provinces Legislature apply only to the Central Provinces; but they may be afterwards applied by the Governor-General in Council to Berar, in exercise of his powers under the Foreign Jurisdiction Order. The Berar Legislative Committee has been constituted to consider Bills which affect Berar only; this class of legislation arises, for instance, from the fact that Berar has a land revenue system differing from that of the Central Provinces. It contains the 17 members elected to the provincial Legislature from Berar and seven other, principally official, members. Its functions are purely advisory. It takes into consideration only the drafts of laws which the Governor-General in Council places before it, and reports them to the Governor-General in Council through the provincial Government. The Governor-General in Council reserves full power to legislate for Berar as he thinks fit, but the Committee is stated to serve, as might be expected, a useful purpose in eliciting informed opinion on legislation affecting Berar.

The control which the Central Provinces Legislature and Government exercise over the revenues of Berar is derived from

the Devolution Rule\* which allocates them to the Central Provinces Government as a source of provincial revenue. The allocation is coupled with the condition that due provision shall be made for necessary expenditure in Berar. This condition has been so faithfully observed that the provincial Government has formally adopted and pursued the policy of spending in Berar the same proportion of its revenues as it collects there, so far as the locales of revenue and expenditure are capable of ascertainment. Since Berar is so much the more wealthy partner, this policy has told very hardly on the Central Provinces.

#### EXCLUDED AREAS OF THE CENTRAL PROVINCES.

91. If the feudatory States be omitted, one-fifth of the Central Provinces is Government reserved forest. Leaving out both the feudatory States and Berar, one-quarter of the remaining territory—consisting of those parts which are coloured purple in the map at the end of this volume—is not subject to the Reforms. In these "excluded areas" the Scheduled Districts Act reserves to the Executive the sole power of deciding what laws shall be applied, but they are not "backward tracts" in the constitutional sense. These territories do not form part of any constituencies, but are subject to the authority of Ministers and have recently been included within the area of operation of the provincial Local Self-Government Act. Their extent was diminished in 1926 when the Mandla district, formerly an excluded area, was formed into a constituency returning a member to the provincial legislature, and we have been informed by the provincial Government that all these excluded areas are now fit to be treated as part and parcel of the rest of the province.

#### Assam.

92. Assam, the smallest and, apart from Burma, the least developed of the Governors' provinces, is in its history and to some extent in its administration interlocked with its much older and larger neighbour Bengal. It was originally constituted as a separate province in 1874 in order to relieve the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal of a portion of the huge territory then under his charge. On the partition of Bengal in 1905, the area became part of the new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam, but when this arrangement was reversed in 1912 Assam again became a separate unit. It is the only Governor's province without a university† and it has no High Court of its own, as the High Court of Bengal still retains its jurisdiction over Assam.

These special features are explained by the fact that the effective size of the province of Assam is far smaller than its

\* D.R. 14 (2).

† Calcutta University, which was founded in 1857, has from the beginning covered the Assam area. Colleges at Gauhati and Sylhet are affiliated to the University.

total area would suggest, for of its 77,500 square miles more than half is made up of hill and frontier tracts sparsely populated and still in large measure unsurveyed. The rest of the province consists of two valleys, the Brahmaputra (or Assam) valley and the Surma valley, which together contain over  $6\frac{1}{2}$  millions out of a total population for the British area of the province of about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  millions. Bengalis number  $3\frac{1}{2}$  millions and Assamese  $1\frac{3}{4}$  millions, and almost all of these are found in the two valleys. On the east is the Indian State of Manipur with 384,000 inhabitants. The capital of the province is the beautifully situated town of Shillong, lying at a height of 5,000 feet among the Khasi and Jaintia hills which form part of the densely wooded range separating the two main valleys from each other. The area of Shillong covers both British and non-British territory, and provides the only example of a municipality or of a local board in any of the hill districts of Assam. The variety of races represented by the inhabitants of Shillong is remarkable—Khasis, Bengalis, Assamese, Madrasis, Sikhs, Pathans, Chinese, and Gurkhas are amongst them.

The development of the province, by the taking up of land for ordinary agriculture and for tea-gardens, has been very rapid in the Assam valley, where there was an increase of population of more than a million in the period of 1901-1921. A similar, but less considerable, increase has taken place in the Surma valley. In some districts the Bengali element preponderates—for example, in Goalpara at the lower end of the Assam valley, and in Sylhet, which is the larger of the two districts in the Surma valley. In both of these areas there has been at different times a movement in favour of secession from Assam and union with Bengal—a change which, if it came about, would materially reduce the effective area and the population of the province. Sylhet contains  $2\frac{1}{2}$  million inhabitants, with a preponderance of Muhammadans, and covers over 5,000 square miles; Goalpara is nearly 4,000 square miles in extent, and has a population of nearly three quarters of a million. In the case of Goalpara the movement for separation is led by the zemindars of the district, who are not satisfied that their interests are in safe keeping in a legislature with so large an Assamese element. The Assam Council at one time actually passed a resolution purporting to recommend the transfer of Sylhet to Bengal, but it is naturally concerned as to the effect which loss of territory might have upon the status of the province. Doubts on this point may have helped to produce the revulsion of feeling shown by a more recent resolution which demanded that Sylhet should continue to form part of Assam. Muhammadans, whose proportion in the population is continually rising with the increase of immigrants from eastern Bengal, appear to be solidly opposed to transfer.

## THE ASSAM TEA INDUSTRY.

93. The tea-growing districts of Assam are of very great importance, and the tea industry is the outstanding feature in the development of the province. It is this industry which has mainly led to the repopulation of the Assam valley and to the reclamation of fertile tracts from jungle. About three-fourths of the capital invested in the industry is European, the total area taken up for tea estates is over  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million acres, and the labour population residing on the estates exceeds one million, more than half of whom are adults. The Commission was informed that more than half a million ex-tea-garden coolies have settled in the province, many of them holding plots of their own for the growing of rice. The European tea-planters maintain an elaborate organisation for the recruiting of labour from various parts of India, especially from Chota Nagpur and Madras, and the representatives of the Assam branch of the Indian Tea Association, who appeared before the Commission, put the cost of imported labour at £20 per head. It should be noted that the labour population on the tea estates is largely Animist, and has little or nothing in common with the Hindu element on the voters' roll. The population of the plains, apart from the tea-garden labour forces, includes many interesting races. There are 200,000 Ahoms who represent the former ruling race of the Brahmaputra valley; about 100,000 Nepalis find employment in the province, mostly as graziers; there are indigenous Kukis and others; and large numbers belonging to the depressed classes of Hindus.

## BACKWARD TRACTS OF ASSAM.

94. The backward tracts† of Assam are of great importance and extent, and nowhere in India is the contrast between the life and outlook of these wild hillmen and the totally distinct civilisation of the plains more manifest. The main areas classed as backward tracts are the Lushai hills, the Naga hills, the Garo hills, the north Cachar hills, and the British portion of the Khasi and Jaintia hills. To these must be added the Lakhimpur frontier tract, the Balipara frontier tract, and the Sadiya frontier tract—the last running up to the Abor country and the borders of Tibet. The Commission was fortunate enough to be able to pay a visit to some of these tribes beyond Dibrugarh, and also met a large assemblage of them at Kohima, in the heart of the Naga country. No description can convey to the reader the striking impression produced by these gatherings, or the difficulty of fitting the needs and interests of such people into a constitutional scheme. These races must be among the most picturesque in the world, and until their energies are sapped by contact with civilisation they remain among the most light-hearted and virile. To the economic self-sufficiency of the indigenous hill races—the Nagas, Kukis, Mishmis, and the rest

† These areas are coloured purple on the map at the end of this volume. A large scale map of Assam will be found on page 78 of volume XIV.

—the tea-planter and the immigrant Bengali alike constitute a real danger. To the loss of self-respect, of confidence in their warlike prowess, of belief in their tribal gods, and of unfettered enjoyment in their patriarchal (or rather, in some tribes, matriarchal) customs—changes which tend to exterminate so many primitive races—there has now been added the curtailment of freedom to burn down the forest and sow seeds in its ashes. The process has already begun, and the best judges doubt how far the recent quiescence of the hill tribes—for the last expedition against them was in 1918—is due to contentment. If progress is to benefit, and not to destroy, these people, it must come about gradually, and the adjustment of their needs with the interests of the immigrant will provide a problem of great complexity and importance for many generations to come.

The great majority of the hill tribes are far from forgetting their warlike past, with its long record of raids upon the plains. Many of them probably regard the *pax Britannica* as a passing inconvenience. The confidence of the plainsman evidenced by the continual immigration and the breaking up of virgin soil is equally a recent feature. The only regular forces in Assam are two battalions stationed at Shillong far from the frontier. Peace in the frontier districts is immediately dependent on the five battalions of the Assam Rifles. One of these battalions is stationed at Aijal in the Lushai hills, and has an outpost at Tuipang overlooking an area under loose political control whence Lushais and Lakhers made three murderous raids in 1917. Another is at Sadiya, with outposts along the foot of hills inhabited by Abors, Miris, Mishmis, Khamtis, and Singphos—the last Mishmi raid was in 1918-19; a third is at Kohima among the Nagas, many of whom still indulge in inter-tribal war; a fourth at Imphal in Manipur State, where the Kuki rebellion eleven years ago resulted in military operations on a large scale; and the fifth battalion in the Balipara frontier tract serves to keep in check the independent Aka, Dafia, Apatanang and Hill Miri tribes, whose last serious raid was made in 1918. The composition of the Assam Rifles is nominally one half Gurkhas and the other half natives of the province. But the Assam plainsmen are loth to enlist; of the hill tribes at present only Lushais and Kukis come forward, and they will not serve outside their own area. There is a danger in recruiting too largely from hill tribes for service against their own kith and kin, and recruiting difficulties are serious. But the discipline and efficiency of these frontier defence battalions is at present high, and during the Great War they trained and supplied drafts for the regular army. Though one duty of the force is to maintain order among the hill tribes of the directly administered areas, its primary duty is the defence of the frontier. In recognition

of this fact the Government of India pays four-fifths of the cost of the battalions.

### Burma.

95. "Burma," wrote the authors of the Joint Report, "is not India," and for the reasons stated in paragraph 198 of that document, they "set aside the problem of Burma's political evolution for separate and future consideration." The Joint Select Committee heard evidence as to the inclusion of Burma as a Governor's province within the Government of India Bill, and advised that it should not be included within the scheme. The members of the Committee stated in their Report:—

"They do not doubt but that the Burmese have deserved and should receive a constitution analogous to that provided in this Bill for their Indian fellow-subjects. But Burma is only by accident part of the responsibility of the Governor-General of India. The Burmese are as distinct from the Indians in race and language as they are from the British."

It was not till 1921 that it was decided to bring Burma within the purview of the Government of India Act, on a line with other provinces. Meanwhile, great dissatisfaction was caused in Burma by the delay and by the belief that a smaller measure of advance was to be granted than was already in force at the time in India in the shape of dyarchy. A special Committee, presided over by Sir Frederick Whyte, visited Burma in 1921, its recommendations were in the main approved, and the constitution of Burma as a Governor's province came into operation at the beginning of 1923. It must not be assumed that the introduction of analogous reforms into Burma indicated that Burma had decided to throw in its lot with the rest of India, and in our second volume we shall have to discuss the difficult problem of Burma's future. The changes which came into effect in 1923 at any rate secured that Burma received what others had already attained, but the fundamental difference between Burma and the rest of India remains. The Statutory Commission has visited Burma and taken evidence there; it has travelled, by rail and by water, considerable distances, and has taken the opportunity of seeing what it could both of the village life and of the industrial enterprises of that country—the oilfields, the great port of Rangoon, the former capital Mandalay, and some other towns in the Irrawaddy valley. We must endeavour to bring home to the British Parliament and the British people in what the difference between Burma and the rest of India essentially consists.

In the first place, the Burmese live in a country which geographically is quite distinct from India, and is cut off from it by sea, mountain and jungle. Its land frontiers form a practically impassable barrier, and it is invariably reached from India by sea, Rangoon being 700 miles from Calcutta, and 1,000 miles from Madras. The association of Burma with India under a single government is, as the Joint Select Committee

observed, accidental; that is to say, the former rulers of India never ruled over Burma, and Burma was included in the charge of the Governor-General purely as a matter of administrative convenience.

From the earliest historical times (say from 1044 A.D., when Anawrata founded the Pagan dynasty) intercourse by sea between India and Burma seems to have been slight till the beginning of the nineteenth century. In spite of the destruction wrought by the Tartar invaders 400 years later, there still exist in the Pagan area, at a bend of the Irrawaddy, the remains of thousands of pagodas, mostly built in the classical period, 1044-1200 A.D., which are some of the most remarkable monuments of Buddhist devotion in the world, and stand as permanent witnesses of the distinctiveness of ancient Burmese civilisation. The people of Burma are entirely different from the peoples of India. They come from a different stock and have a different history. Their religion, languages, social system, manners and customs, and national dress are different, and they have a divergent outlook on life. No one who visits Burma after some experience of India can fail to be struck by the distinctive character not merely of Burmese habits, but of the whole Burman temperament. The cosmopolitan port of Rangoon contains, indeed, an Indian element, largely due to immigration from Madras, which is actually larger than its Burmese population, but the impression of difference is intensified as soon as one goes up country; and of the total population of Burma, which now exceeds 13 millions, Indians only amount to about 900,000, or under 7 per cent. It is noteworthy that nearly two-thirds of this Indian population consists of males; many Hindus marry Burmese women, and their children as a rule are brought up as Burmese and adopt the dress, manners and customs of the Burmese. This is not perhaps so much the case with Muhammadans, but even so, many of their descendants by Burmese wives also prefer to consider themselves to be Burmans rather than Indians. The frequent cry that the Indian is displacing the Burman is largely due to the numbers of Indians who can be seen landing at Rangoon, and to the concentration of the Indian element in certain urban areas. As the emigration and immigration statistics of the principal ports show, the Indian comes and goes, and the steady excess of Indian immigrants over Indian emigrants may be a measure rather of economic development than of any Indian penetration of Burma. If the Indian immigrant does stay he tends to be absorbed into the Burmese population. Whether he stays or returns, he often plays a part in the economic life of Burma which the Burman is not very willing to undertake for himself (for example, in providing coolie labour), for the Burman is not equally willing to face hard work for small pay.

## THE UNITY OF BURMA.

96. To those whose experience has lain in other parts of India it is the homogeneity of Burma which is its most striking characteristic. The Burman, being a Buddhist, recognises none of the social divisions of caste and custom erected by Brahminism. The women of Burma occupy a position of freedom and independence unrivalled in India. Again, the educational and economic conditions of the Burmese are very uniform. The percentage of literacy according to the census of 1921 was 51 for men: Burma here owes its fortunate position principally to its monastic schools. The percentage of literacy among women is 11.2—more than five times the proportion for India as a whole. In secondary and higher education, however, Burma makes a very much poorer showing than India. Class antagonism is notably absent. From early days, apart from the royal house, there has been no aristocracy in Burma. Extremes, whether of wealth or of poverty, are far less marked than in any other province, and the average standard of living is decidedly higher in Burma than in India. The Burman, though remarkably proud of his race, feels no intense racial antipathies. Tolerance is a leading tenet of Buddhism, and the Burman is ordinarily free from bigotry or fanaticism. But serious crime is alarmingly prevalent. The percentage of convictions for theft is three and a half times that of the rest of India. The number of murders was 867 in 1926 and 825 in 1927. The police reports attribute most of them to an entire lack of self-control.

Burma is, moreover, as compared with other Indian provinces, remarkably uniform in race, language and religion. Indigenous races form 91 per cent. of the whole population. These, apart from the 9 million Burmans, consist principally of 1,200,000 Karens, one million Shans, 300,000 Chins and 150,000 Kachins. But except the Karens, these races live mainly in the frontier areas. The Karens alone of the minor races in the plains show no signs of absorption by the Burmese. They are chiefly to be found in the States of Karenni and the five British districts of Amherst, Thaton, Bassein, Myaungmya and Maubin. Of the total number of Christians in Burma (257,000), 178,000 are found among the Karens. The Karen race is somewhat despised by the Burman (as all non-Burman races are) but the Karen is said now to be held in much greater respect than formerly.

Of the non-indigenous races the Chinese (150,000), the Indo-Burmans (120,000), the Indians (887,000), Europeans (8,000), and the Anglo-Indians (17,000), are the most important. The languages spoken in Burma closely follow the race divisions. The Karens, Shans, Chins and Kachins, each speak their own language. But though as many as 128 indigenous tongues are distinguished in the province, nearly seven-tenths of the whole population—and the proportion is growing—speak Burmese or a closely allied language. So slight are the differences of dialect



observed, accidental; that is to say, the former rulers of India never ruled over Burma, and Burma was included in the charge of the Governor-General purely as a matter of administrative convenience.

From the earliest historical times (say from 1044 A.D., when Anawrata founded the Pagan dynasty) intercourse by sea between India and Burma seems to have been slight till the beginning of the nineteenth century. In spite of the destruction wrought by the Tartar invaders 400 years later, there still exist in the Pagan area, at a bend of the Irrawaddy, the remains of thousands of pagodas, mostly built in the classical period, 1044-1200 A.D., which are some of the most remarkable monuments of Buddhist devotion in the world, and stand as permanent witnesses of the distinctiveness of ancient Burmese civilisation. The people of Burma are entirely different from the peoples of India. They come from a different stock and have a different history. Their religion, languages, social system, manners and customs, and national dress are different, and they have a divergent outlook on life. No one who visits Burma after some experience of India can fail to be struck by the distinctive character not merely of Burmese habits, but of the whole Burman temperament. The cosmopolitan port of Rangoon contains, indeed, an Indian element, largely due to immigration from Madras, which is actually larger than its Burmese population, but the impression of difference is intensified as soon as one goes up country; and of the total population of Burma, which now exceeds 13 millions, Indians only amount to about 900,000, or under 7 per cent. It is noteworthy that nearly two-thirds of this Indian population consists of males; many Hindus marry Burmese women, and their children as a rule are brought up as Burmese and adopt the dress, manners and customs of the Burmese. This is not perhaps so much the case with Muhammadans, but even so, many of their descendants by Burmese wives also prefer to consider themselves to be Burmans rather than Indians. The frequent cry that the Indian is displacing the Burman is largely due to the numbers of Indians who can be seen landing at Rangoon, and to the concentration of the Indian element in certain urban areas. As the emigration and immigration statistics of the principal ports show, the Indian comes and goes, and the steady excess of Indian immigrants over Indian emigrants may be a measure rather of economic development than of any Indian penetration of Burma. If the Indian immigrant does stay he tends to be absorbed into the Burmese population. Whether he stays or returns, he often plays a part in the economic life of Burma which the Burman is not very willing to undertake for himself (for example, in providing coolie labour), for the Burman is not equally willing to face hard work for small pay.

## THE UNITY OF BURMA.

96. To those whose experience has lain in other parts of India it is the homogeneity of Burma which is its most striking characteristic. The Burman, being a Buddhist, recognises none of the social divisions of caste and custom erected by Brahminism. The women of Burma occupy a position of freedom and independence unrivalled in India. Again, the educational and economic conditions of the Burmese are very uniform. The percentage of literacy according to the census of 1921 was 51 for men : Burma here owes its fortunate position principally to its monastic schools. The percentage of literacy among women is 11.2—more than five times the proportion for India as a whole. In secondary and higher education, however, Burma makes a very much poorer showing than India. Class antagonism is notably absent. From early days, apart from the royal house, there has been no aristocracy in Burma. Extremes, whether of wealth or of poverty, are far less marked than in any other province, and the average standard of living is decidedly higher in Burma than in India. The Burman, though remarkably proud of his race, feels no intense racial antipathies. Tolerance is a leading tenet of Buddhism, and the Burman is ordinarily free from bigotry or fanaticism. But serious crime is alarmingly prevalent. The percentage of convictions for theft is three and a half times that of the rest of India. The number of murders was 867 in 1926 and 825 in 1927. The police reports attribute most of them to an entire lack of self-control.

Burma is, moreover, as compared with other Indian provinces, remarkably uniform in race, language and religion. Indigenous races form 91 per cent. of the whole population. These, apart from the 9 million Burmans, consist principally of 1,200,000 Karens, one million Shans, 300,000 Chins and 150,000 Kachins. But except the Karens, these races live mainly in the frontier areas. The Karens alone of the minor races in the plains show no signs of absorption by the Burmese. They are chiefly to be found in the States of Karenni and the five British districts of Amherst, Thaton, Bassein, Myaungmya and Maubin. Of the total number of Christians in Burma (257,000), 178,000 are found among the Karens. The Karen race is somewhat despised by the Burman (as all non-Burman races are) but the Karen is said now to be held in much greater respect than formerly.

Of the non-indigenous races the Chinese (150,000), the Indo-Burmans (120,000), the Indians (887,000), Europeans (8,000), and the Anglo-Indians (17,000), are the most important. The languages spoken in Burma closely follow the race divisions. The Karens, Shans, Chins and Kachins, each speak their own language. But though as many as 128 indigenous tongues are distinguished in the province, nearly seven-tenths of the whole population—and the proportion is growing—speak Burmese or a closely allied language. So slight are the differences of dialect

that Burmese speakers from all over the province can readily converse. The Burman, though a Buddhist, almost everywhere retains a belief in the spirits of the primitive pre-Buddhist religion which are called *nats*. These inhabit every village, forest or field. At the last census over 11 millions were returned as Buddhists and only 700,000 as Animists.

On the administrative side Burma is free from those complications to which the existence of Indian States gives rise in other provinces. The only non-British territory lies on its eastern border and is known as Karenni. It actually consists of three frontier States inhabited by Karens and Shans, with a combined area of 4,000 square miles and a population of 64,000. These States are under the political control of the Governor of Burma.

#### THE DEFENCE OF BURMA.

97. The land frontier of Burma on the east is so difficult that it seems scarcely possible for any large body of men to cross it. In contrast, therefore, with the north-western frontier, the defence of which is the constant anxiety of the Government of India and a vast drain upon its resources, the land frontiers of Burma are so comparatively secure that their defence has been entrusted principally to the provincial Government. The "Burma Military Police," a body of 10,000 men with 40 gazetted officers, though organised on military lines, forms a part of the general police force of the province. While constituting, therefore, an armed reserve to the civil police of the province in the preservation of internal order, its essential purpose is to maintain peace among the non-Burman tribes in the Shan States and other Hill Tracts and (like the Assam Rifles and the Frontier Militia of the North-West Frontier Province), to repel the raiders who occasionally cross the border. The Government of Burma receives from the Government of India a contribution which covers the greater part of its cost. Apart from this semi-military force, mainly recruited from the martial races of India and from the non-Burman inhabitants of the Hill Tracts, there are normally stationed in Burma only two infantry battalions and two companies of Sappers and Miners. Burma's accessibility by sea renders the reinforcement of its troops an easy matter. That, but for the existence of a powerful army in India, Burma would require more troops for its own security there can be little doubt. The troops stationed in Burma are, moreover, British and Indian troops. The strict economy enforced of late in the Indian military budget has left the Indian Government unwilling to continue the experiments which have from time to time been made with the recruiting of Burmans. Burmans are less amenable than the martial races of India to military discipline and Burman units are consequently at present more expensive and less efficient than Indian units. It has been found difficult to recruit Burmans even for the Military Police.

But Burman public opinion earnestly desires these experiments to continue and, were Burma responsible for her own military budget, would certainly aim at their continuance.

98. The Burman has so far been content to leave large-scale commerce and industry almost entirely in foreign hands. In Rangoon, which in the volume of its exports and imports ranks only below Calcutta and Bombay, two-thirds of the male inhabitants are Indians. Its principal exports are rice, oil, teak and hides. Its wealthy merchants are Europeans, Indians and Chinese. Of other cities only Mandalay had in 1921 a population exceeding 100,000. Mandalay is a predominantly Burmese city, but its industries are all of them on the village scale. Burma, however, is as yet a young country and it has great natural resources. Three-fifths of the total area of the province consists of forest and 17,000 square miles are still wholly unadministered. The density of the population in 1921 was only 57 per square mile (against the average for the whole of British India of 226, for England and Wales of 649, and for Scotland of 161).

Although the total area of Burma is no less than 230,000 square miles, with an extreme length of 1,300 miles and an extreme width of 700 miles, it has less than 2,000 miles of railway and about 2,000 miles of metalled roads. The Irrawaddy and other rivers are the natural highways of the country. The trade of its ports has enormously increased of recent years, and it seems to stand at the threshold of a very much greater development.

#### EXCLUDED AREAS OF BURMA.

99. As will be seen from the map at the end of the volume, the backward tracts of Burma are of great extent. The purple colouring, however, covers not only such areas as are administered as backward tracts, but the unadministered areas also—such for example as the "Triangle" in the extreme north-east where an expedition was recently undertaken for enforcing the release of slaves.

The largest and most homogeneous of the administered tracts is that known as the Shan States. Though so described, the Shan "States" are a part of British India, but administered by hereditary chiefs or Sawbwas, to whom in varying degree large criminal, civil and revenue powers over the population of their areas have been assigned. The Shan States account for 54,000, the whole backward tracts for about 88,000, and the unadministered areas for another 17,000 square miles of the total area of Burma. But the population of the Shan States is only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  millions; that of the rest of the backward tracts and unadministered areas is about five hundred thousand more. The Shan States have their own Commissioner, who superintends their administration on behalf of the Governor. They have recently been formed into a Federation which receives a fixed proportion

of the revenues of the component States and provides them with the more essential public services. The Federation pays to Burma a tribute of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  lakhs of rupees a year, and receives from Burma a subvention of  $6\frac{1}{2}$  lakhs. It has its own council, presided over by the Commissioner and attended by all the more important Sawbwas, which discusses the Federation budget and advises on the extension of laws to its territories. Apart from the Shan Federation, there are isolated Shan, Chin and Kachin areas, only one of which is large enough to form a self-contained district, the rest being superintended, on behalf of the Governor in Council, by the Deputy Commissioners of the districts within which they lie. The need of special qualifications and of long experience in the administration of the backward tracts has been recognised by the recent constitution of a separate Burma Frontier Service which now contains some 50 members.

The Commission met a number of the principal Sawbwas from the Shan States, and they appeared to be very well contented with their present system of administration. The dictum of the Burma Government on the Chin and Kachin hill tracts applies, we consider, to all the administered excluded tracts of Burma :—

“These . . . areas are all unfitted to participate in a constitution on representative lines suitable for Burma proper. Their peoples are educationally backward, and have evinced no desire to be linked with the Burmans, who in turn betray little interest in these hill tracts.”

So far as our short experience of Burma goes, we can confidently affirm the truth of these remarks.

#### **British India outside Governors' Provinces.**

100. Section 58 of the Government of India Act provides that the North-West Frontier Province, British Baluchistan, the province of Delhi, Ajmer-Merwara, Coorg and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands shall be administered by Chief Commissioners. These important areas (coloured pink on the map), therefore, form no part of any Governor's province. The method of government which has been adopted in them is so closely connected with their geographical position and with other special characteristics that it will be better to postpone any description to a later part of this volume\* where their administrative system is described.

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\* Part IV., ch. 5.

## CHAPTER 9.—THE INDIAN STATES.

101. No account of the conditions of the Indian problem could be adequate which did not include some description of the Indian States. They constitute an outstanding feature which is without precedent or analogy elsewhere. Some of them are countries comparable in size and importance to a British province; others are much smaller; and at the far end of the scale we find Estates of a few acres owned or shared by petty chieftains and others who exercise no jurisdictional powers. Broadly speaking, however, the constitutional problem which arises in connection with the Indian States is common to them all and must be sharply distinguished from questions which relate solely to British India. The future development of India cannot be envisaged without bearing fully in mind their existence and influence, and the Crown's obligations in regard to them. We shall have much to say on this aspect of the matter in our second volume. Our present concern is to give a short description of the States themselves and of the general nature of their relations with the British Crown.

102. The Indian States Committee, which was appointed in December, 1927, to investigate the relationship between the Paramount Power and the Indian States and to make recommendations for the adjustment of financial and economic relations between British India and the States, reported early in 1929, and reference should be made to that Report for a further account of the situation.\* The Committee classified the Indian States as they exist to-day in the following table :—†

Class of State, Estate, etc.	Number.	Area in square miles.	Population.	Revenue in crores of rupees.
I. States the rulers of which are members of the Chamber of Princes in their own right.	108	514,886	59,847,186	42·16
II. States the rulers of which are represented in the Chamber of Princes by twelve members of their order elected by themselves.	127	76,846	8,004,114	2·89
III. Estates, Jagirs and others	327	6,406	801,674	·74

\* The Report, printed as Cmd. 3302 of 1929, is usually referred to as the Report of the Butler Committee. The Chairman of the Committee was Sir Harcourt Butler, formerly Governor in turn of the United Provinces and of Burma, and previously a Member of the Governor-General's Council. The other members of the Committee were Colonel the Hon. Sidney Peel and Professor Sir William Holdsworth.

† States in the North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan were not included.

Hyderabad has an area of 82,700 square miles and a population of  $12\frac{1}{2}$  millions—in other words, it is nearly as large as Great Britain and has nearly twice the number of inhabitants of Portugal or Austria. The revenue of the State of Hyderabad amounts to  $6\frac{1}{2}$  crores of rupees, or about £5 millions annually. Kashmir State, in the extreme north, is of approximately equal size and has a population of nearly  $3\frac{1}{2}$  millions. Mysore, in the south, has 6 millions of inhabitants, with an area of just under 30,000 square miles, so that it is larger than the Irish Free State and has twice its population. Further south are the two densely populated States of Travancore and Cochin, with over 4 millions and nearly one million inhabitants respectively. The territory of the Gaekwar of Baroda, which is made up of several separated areas north of Bombay, includes a population of over 2 millions. The map at the end of this volume indicates in yellow the parts of India (two-fifths of the whole) which are not British territory but are made up of the States. To the eye, the largest continuous non-British area is that of Rajputana, but the Rajputana Agency consists of a number of separate States. Amongst them (we adopt alphabetical order) are Alwar, Bikaner, Bundi, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kotah, Tonk, and Udaipur. Further to the east is Gwalior, with a population of over 3 millions; and, in the Central Indian Agency, Bhopal, Indore, Orchha, and Rewa are familiar names; while, to the south-west of Rajputana, and bordering on the coast, lies the extremely numerous assemblage of States and Estates included in the Western States Agency (Cutch and Kathiawar), of which the better known are Bhavnagar, Cutch, Junagadh, and Nawanagar. Out of a total of 562 States, no less than 286 are situated in Kathiawar and Gujerat. In the Punjab, Patiala is the premier Sikh State, lying under the Himalayas and stretching up to Simla. Further west is the Muhammadan State of Bahawalpur. In Baluchistan is the Khanate of Kalat, which occupies about two-thirds of the whole province. In Bombay we have the great Mahratta State of Kolhapur. In the United Provinces lie Rampur and Benares—the latter State was constituted in its present form as recently as 1911. In Bengal and Assam are Cooch Behar, Tripura, and Manipur.

We have made no attempt to maintain any particular order of precedence in this list, which necessarily omits many other important States, but the references which we have given will be sufficient to illustrate how numerous and varied are some of the chief units.

### Characteristics of Indian States.

103. The Indian States present a striking diversity of characteristics—geographical, economic and political. They dovetail into the various provinces of British India. The main arteries of communication, essential to the welfare of India as a whole,

constantly pass in and out of State territory. On the journey from Bombay to Delhi, for example, the boundary between what is, and what is not, British territory is crossed many times. The frontiers which divide the States from British India do not, as a rule, present any prominent physical feature. The boundary has been drawn as it is either because the limit of State jurisdiction has thus been laid down long ago, or as the result of negotiation and agreement in the days of British expansion. It rarely happens that the political outlines of an Indian State are coincident with racial or linguistic divisions. For instance, there are more Sikhs in the Punjab province than in the Sikh States; and more Mahrattas in the Bombay Presidency than under the rule of the Mahratta Princes. On the other hand, the bulk of the Kanarese speaking people are subjects of the Maharajah of Mysore, while others live in parts of the Bombay and Madras Presidencies.

The internal government of the different States varies considerably; some 30 of them have instituted a form of legislative council invariably of a consultative nature. Forty have established High Courts, more or less based on the European model. Thirty-four claim to have separated executive from judicial functions. There is a very wide difference in the degree of administrative efficiency reached by the most advanced and the more backward States; the best of them are justly proud of the high standard attained. But for our present purpose, the essential point to bear in mind is a feature which is common to all Indian States alike. They are not British territory and their subjects are not British subjects. The relations between each of them and the Paramount Power may be ascertained or deduced from Treaty, or other written document, or usage and agreement; but however that may be, the Crown is, in each case, responsible for the State's external relations and for its territorial integrity. There are about 40 States, all of major importance, which have actual Treaties with the Paramount Power. A larger number of States have some form of engagement or "Sanad," i.e., a concession or acknowledgment of authority or privilege, generally coupled with conditions, proceeding from the Paramount Power. The remainder enjoy, in some form or other, recognition of their status by the Crown.

#### **Relations with Paramount Power.**

104. In this brief description, which is all that we are attempting, we are not called upon to discuss or expound matters which may be in controversy or doubt between the States on the one hand and the Paramount Power on the other. The following summary will, we hope, be sufficient to convey a general impression of the nature of the relation. Each State manages its own internal affairs by making and administering its own laws, and imposing, collecting, and spending its own taxes. There is, as a rule, a British Resident or other Agent whose duty it



is to offer advice to the Ruler and to report to the British authorities; and there is the right of the Crown (which at present acts through the Governor-General in Council) to intervene as the Paramount Power in the internal affairs of the State in cases of gross misgovernment, or in cases where such intervention is called for, having regard to the duty of the Crown as Paramount Power to preserve the dynasty, to be answerable for the integrity of the State, and to maintain peace in India. The Report of the Butler Committee sets out a series of pronouncements on behalf of the Crown on paramountcy, and to these pronouncements reference may be made to ascertain the views expressed on behalf of the Paramount Power from time to time as to the nature and exercise of its authority. It was contended, as we understand, before the Butler Committee on behalf of the Indian Princes, that the occasions for the exercise of paramountcy should be more precisely defined. They would like to see the creation of new machinery, not for increasing their own powers and privileges, but for establishing on lines more definite than the reservation of discretion the basis of intervention in the internal affairs of the States. We cannot enter upon this complex matter, for not only has it never been before us, but the Statutory Commission could not presume to trench upon debatable ground which has recently been surveyed by the Butler Committee. That Committee found it impossible to define paramountcy in a formula, and indicated that it was in the generality of the conception that the States would find their best security for the preservation of their independent rights in times to come.

We must also transcribe the extremely important conclusion reached by the Butler Committee on another point in paragraph 58 of its Report:—

“The states demand that without their own agreement the rights and obligations of the Paramount Power should not be assigned to persons who are not under its control, for instance an Indian government in British India responsible to an Indian legislature. If any government in the nature of a dominion government should be constituted in British India, such a government would clearly be a new government resting on a new and written constitution. The contingency has not arisen; we are not directly concerned with it; the relations of the states to such a government would raise questions of law and policy which we cannot now and here foreshadow in detail. We feel bound, however, to draw attention to the really grave apprehension of the Princes on this score, and to record our strong opinion that in view of the historical nature of the relationship between the Paramount Power and the Princes, the latter should not be transferred without their own agreement to a relationship with a new government in British India responsible to an Indian legislature.”

#### **Incidents of State Government.**

105. A certain number of States pay tribute, varying in amount according to the circumstances of each case, to the Crown, the sums paid going to the revenues of India. This tribute has sometimes arisen from the terms on which territory was exchanged or restored, or from the settlement of claims between

the Governments, but in many cases it is in lieu of former obligations to supply or maintain troops. There are also cases in which tribute is paid by some subordinate States to a larger State, e.g., a number of States in Kathiawar and Gujerat pay tribute to Baroda, and Gwalior claims tribute from some of the smaller States of Central India.

Most of the inland States impose their own import and export duties at their own boundaries. Mysore is the most important exception. In many States, import and export duties yield a fraction of State revenue second only to land revenue, and in the aggregate these State duties on imports and exports amount to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  crores of rupees, or about £3,375,000 a year. The right to impose duties at the frontier is a sign of sovereignty to which the States may naturally attach importance, though of course it would not be any derogation from their status if a Zollverein agreement could be reached.

The external relations of the States are, as we have said, entirely in the hands of the Crown. For international purposes, therefore, the territory of Indian States is in the same position as the territory of British India, and their subjects are in the same position as British subjects. An Indian State cannot hold diplomatic or other official intercourse with any foreign Power. India, of course, is a member of the League of Nations and at Geneva is represented as a unit by a delegation which in practice includes a Ruler of an Indian State.

British cantonments have been for a variety of reasons located in Indian States, in places like Secunderabad, Bangalore and Mhow.

The Government of India, in connection with its responsibility for the strategic defence of India, encourages the major States to maintain, but only so far as their financial resources permit, bodies of efficient forces (called Indian State Forces) for co-operation with the Indian Army, both in the external defence of India and the maintenance of internal order. Inspection staff is provided and paid for by the Government of India.

The States are responsible for their own police.

Arrangements are from time to time made between the Crown and the Government of an Indian State to secure to the former special jurisdiction in portions of the State, e.g., in the belts of land within the territories of those States, which are taken up for railway purposes, the Government of India apply such laws as are necessary for the administration of civil and criminal justice. There are, however, some State railways not forming part of important through routes, where the jurisdiction has been left with the States concerned. An instance is the Jodhpur-Bikaner line. One result of the above arrangement is that a person arrested in British India and charged with a railway offence committed in an Indian State could not defend himself by saying that whatever he did he did outside British jurisdiction. The same sort of arrangements exist about cantonments, and

sometimes about British residencies. The Government of India may require that European British subjects are not tried in State Courts, but are either tried by British Courts established in the Indian States, or are sent for trial before Courts in British India.

As regards Posts and Telegraphs, the British Telegraph system, by agreement, extends everywhere. In most cases similar agreements exist for the service of the British Post in Indian States, but fifteen States have their own postal departments and five of these have conventions by which they work in co-operation with the British Posts.

There are only eight States which mint their own rupee currency. In the rest, the mints are only worked for copper coinage or for striking silver or gold coins on special ceremonial occasions.

#### References in the Joint Report.

106. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report contains a chapter\* devoted to the subject of the Indian States, to which we would refer for an account of the position as it was twelve years ago and of the steps then proposed to be taken. We will not go back into earlier history; it will be sufficient to quote a short passage from the chapter to which we have just referred:—

“The policy of the British Government towards the States has changed from time to time, passing from the original plan of non-intervention in all matters beyond its own ring-fence to the policy of ‘subordinate isolation’ initiated by Lord Hastings; which in its turn gave way before the existing conception of the relation between the States and the Government of India, which may be described as one of union and co-operation on their part with the paramount power. In spite of the varieties and complexities of treaties, engagements, and sanads, the general position as regards the rights and obligations of the Native States can be summed up in a few words. The States are guaranteed security from without; the paramount power acts for them in relation to foreign powers and other States, and it intervenes when the internal peace of their territories is seriously threatened. On the other hand the States’ relations to foreign powers are those of the paramount power; they share the obligation for the common defence; and they are under a general responsibility for the good government and welfare of their territories.”†

The Joint Report went on to refer to the splendid services rendered to the Empire by the Indian States during the great war:—

“Imperial Service Troops from over a score of States have fought in various fields, and many with great gallantry and honour. The Princes have helped lavishly with men and horses, material and money, and some of them have in person served in France and elsewhere. They have shown that our quarrel is their quarrel; and they have both learned and taught the lesson of their own indissoluble connection with the Empire, and their immense value as part of the polity of India.”‡

But the increasing association of the States with the interests of British India was not confined to co-operation on the field

\* M/C Report, Chap. X., “The Native States”, paras. 296–312.

† M/C Report, para. 297.

‡ M/C Report, para. 298.

of battle. The Joint Report went on to describe the influences which, in time of peace, had been at work to increase the range of matters in which the States realised their solidarity with British India. And having thus surveyed the ground, Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford made certain recommendations, the most important of which, from the point of view of constitutional structure, was the creation of the Council of Princes. We must now briefly describe the position and powers of this body.

### **The Chamber of Princes.**

107. Various proposals had been made before the Montagu-Chelmsford Report to organise a system of conferences amongst the Ruling Princes of India with a view both of securing the expression of their collective opinion and of providing opportunities for counsel and consultation in matters of common concern to India as a whole. But it was not until after the publication of the Joint Report that the idea took permanent and effective shape. It is not, of course, to the Government of India Act that we must turn to find the institution of the Chamber of Princes; indeed we are not aware of any specific reference to the Indian States in the Act, though in many places "India" is referred to as distinguished from British India.\* It was by Royal Proclamation that the Chamber of Princes was set up on 8th February, 1921. The ceremony of inauguration was performed, on behalf of the King-Emperor, by the Duke of Connaught in the Dewun-i-am of the Mogul Palace in Delhi. The Proclamation which was read on this occasion contained the memorable passage:—

"In My former Proclamation I repeated the assurance, given on many occasions by my Royal Predecessors and Myself, of My determination ever to maintain unimpaired the privileges, rights, and dignities of the Princes of India. The Princes may rest assured that this pledge remains inviolate and inviolable."

### **Its Composition.**

108. The Chamber of Princes contains, in the first place, 108 Rulers of States who are members in their own right. They are Ruling Princes who enjoy permanent dynastic salutes of eleven guns or over, together with other Rulers of States who exercise such full or practically full internal powers as, in the opinion of the Viceroy, qualify them for individual admission to the Chamber. In the second place, the Chamber includes twelve additional members elected by the Rulers of 127 other States not included in the above. These representative members are chosen from among these Ruling Chiefs by a system of group

\* "India" is defined in the Interpretation Act as meaning "British India, together with any territories of any Native Princes or Chiefs under the suzerainty of His Majesty exercised through the Governor-General of India, or through any Governor or other officer subordinate to the Governor-General of India."

voting. The Viceroy is the President of the Chamber, and a Chancellor and Pro-Chancellor are elected from among the members annually. An extremely important organ of the Chamber is its Standing Committee which consists of seven members including the Chancellor and Pro-Chancellor. The functions of the Standing Committee are to advise the Viceroy on questions referred to the Committee by him "and to propose for his consideration other questions affecting Indian States generally or which are of concern either to the States as a whole or to British India and the States in common."

#### Its Powers.

109. The Chamber of Princes is a deliberative, consultative and advisory, but not an executive, body. It meets annually in its own Hall of Debate in the magnificent Council House which has recently been completed at New Delhi. Two important provisions in its constitution must be set out *verbatim* :—

"Treaties and internal affairs of individual States, rights and interests, dignities and powers, privileges and prerogatives of individual Princes and Chiefs, their States and the members of their families and the actions of individual Rulers shall not be discussed in the Chamber."

"The institution of the Chamber shall not prejudice in any way the engagements or the relations of any State with the Viceroy or Governor-General (including the right of direct correspondence) nor shall any recommendation of the Chamber in any way prejudice the rights or restrict the freedom of action of any State."

The latter of these provisions makes plain that the establishment of the Chamber of Princes has not affected the individual relations between any Indian State and the representative of the Crown. The Viceroy is himself in charge of the Political Department of the Government of India, and this is the department which deals with matters affecting the Indian States. Following upon the recommendations of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report,\* most of the more important States are now placed in direct political relations with the Central Government and this has involved the transfer, in a large number of cases, of States' relations from a provincial Government to the Government of India. There are, however, some States that are not in direct relations with the Governor-General in Council but with the Governors in Council. Most of the important Rulers have and frequently exercise the right of direct access to and correspondence with the Viceroy. The Political Department of the Government of India is manned by officers, for the most part British, selected from the Indian Civil Service and the Indian Army. Political officers are accredited as individual Residents to the greater States. In each of the Agencies, namely, Rajputana, Central India, the Punjab States, the Western India States, the Madras States and Baluchistan there is an Agent to the Governor-General with a staff of officers, many of whom

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\* M/C Report, para. 310.

are accredited to particular States or groups of States. At the head of the Political Department is the Political Secretary who is the Viceroy's immediate adviser in affairs concerning the States.

### **Its Constitutional Importance.**

110. The establishment of the Chamber of Princes marks an important stage in the development of relations between the Crown and the States, for it involves a definite breach in an earlier principle of policy according to which it was rather the aim of the Crown to discourage joint action and joint consultation between the Indian States and to treat each State as an isolated unit apart from its neighbours. That principle, indeed, had already been giving place to the idea of conference and co-operation amongst the Ruling Princes of India, but this later conception was not embodied in permanent shape until the Chamber of Princes was established. The Chamber has enabled free interchange of views to take place on weighty matters concerning the relationship of the States with the Crown and concerning other points of contact with British India. Notwithstanding that some States of great importance, like Hyderabad and Mysore, have stood aloof,\* its work during the last nine years—especially, perhaps, the work of its Standing Committee—proves that the time was ripe for advance. But this advance does not as yet cross the boundary which must be traversed before the first actual step on the road of All-India federation can be taken. We shall, in our second volume, discuss the development which may be hoped for in future relations with the Indian States, and we conclude this chapter by a quotation which postulates the necessary condition of further progress in this direction.

“I make no secret of my view,” said Lord Irwin in June, 1929, “that in any proposals that may be made it is essential, on every ground of policy and equity, to carry the free assent of the Ruling Princes of India, and that any suggestion that the treaty rights which the Princes are accustomed to regard as sacrosanct, can be lightly set aside is only calculated to postpone the solution that we seek.”

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\* It was, however, announced at the meeting of the Chamber in February, 1930, that H.E.H. the Nizam had sanctioned two grants of one lakh of rupees each for special purposes and an annual contribution of Rs. 50,000 from 1930 to 1935 towards the expenses of the Chamber.

## CHAPTER 10.—THE ARMY IN INDIA.

111. In considering the implications of the policy, to the pursuit of which the British Parliament is solemnly pledged, for the increasing association of Indians in every branch of Indian administration, and for the development of responsible government in British India, no question is at once more difficult and more crucial than the future organisation, recruitment, and control of the Army in India. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report was written while the Great War was raging, and in the three paragraphs (328-330) which it devoted, in a final chapter headed "Miscellaneous," to the subject of the Army the principal matter dwelt upon concerned the way in which the services of the Indian Army in the various theatres of war had been and would be recognised. The authors mentioned the announcement of His Majesty's Government that the bar which had hitherto prevented the admission of Indians into the commissioned ranks of His Majesty's Army should be removed, and declared that this decision had established the principle that an Indian soldier could earn the King's commission by his military conduct. This apparently refers primarily to promotion from the ranks. The Report went on to say that other methods of appointment had not yet been decided upon, and emphasised "the necessity of grappling with the problem." An earlier paragraph took note of a general demand from Indian political leaders that extended opportunities of military service be afforded to the Indian people, but the passage continued "It is impossible to deal with this large question in connexion with our present proposals. The War is not yet over. . . . The requirements of the future will very largely depend upon the form of peace which is attained. We therefore leave this question for consideration hereafter, but with the note that it must be faced and settled."\*

112. It was natural that the authors of the Report, writing in the crisis of the spring of 1918, after mentioning with admiration the services rendered to the common cause by Indian armaments and expressing satisfaction at the increased recognition which was being given to such services, should have contented themselves with noting the urgency and importance of the Army questions which would emerge after peace had been attained. But this does not alter the fact that the constitutional future envisaged for British India by Mr. Montagu's declaration of 20th August, 1917, and the new scheme of government elaborated in the Report and embodied in the Act of 1919 inherently involved a tremendous question which is not, we think, formulated or indeed referred to in the Report, viz., what in view of the resolve that British India should advance to the goal of self-government within the Empire, is the nature of the arrangements which must be contemplated and in due course

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\* M/C Report, para. 328.

reached for her external defence and her internal security? We feel strongly that it would be a great disservice both to Britain and to India for this question now to be shirked, or for a method of treatment to be adopted which is confined to the search for temporary expedients wrapped up in soothing generalities, which only serve to foment suspicions of the *bona fides* of British policy on the one hand, and to divert attention from the ultimate and fundamental difficulties which Indian politicians themselves will have to face on the other. The best service we can render in this regard is to set out, plainly and fearlessly, for the consideration both of the British Parliament and of the political leaders of India the special features of India's military problem which must be provided for before Army administration can be a function of a self-governing India.

### The Task of External Defence.

113. As regards external defence, India has to carry a constant burden of anxiety and provide against actual dangers on her north-west frontier, which are wholly without parallel in the case of the self-governing Dominions. The 3,000 miles of land frontier which separate Canada from the United States are undefended by a fort or a gun, and armed conflict with her neighbour is unthinkable. Australia, New Zealand, Newfoundland and Ireland are islands; the Union of South Africa is equally unlikely to be invaded. The withdrawal of British troops from these self-governing areas has left them to organise such local forces as they thought fit, recruited and officered from within their own boundaries, and administered by a department of government which requires to spend but a small fraction\* of their revenues on the purpose. These Dominion

#### \* DEFENCE EXPENDITURE—FINANCIAL YEAR 1927-28.

(Pensions are not included).

*Figures in thousands of pounds.*

	Central Expendi- ture.	State or Provincial Expendi- ture.	Total.	Net Defence Expendi- ture.**	% of Central Expendi- ture.	% of Total.
	£	£	£	£	%	%
Australia ...	82,121	113,847	195,968	4,733	5·8	2·4
Canada† ...	65,700	31,300	97,000	2,785	4·2	2·9
Irish Free State	31,437	—	31,437	2,264†	7·2	7·2
New Zealand ...	24,945	—	24,945	969	3·9	3·9
South Africa ...	22,841	10,635§	33,476	809	3·5	2·4

\*\* From League of Nations Armaments Year Book.

† 1926-27.

‡ Gross.

§ Appropriations.



units, drawn as they are for the most part from a homogeneous population, constitute a nucleus out of which, as the experience of 1914-1918 showed, immensely powerful armies of the highest fighting quality may be developed under the stress of emergency, but in normal times they have no elaborate part to play in an organised scheme of national defence, for the simple reason that there is no quarter from which attack is to be apprehended or guarded against.

114. Contrast with this the situation of the Army in India so far as the problem of external defence is concerned. India throughout history has had to endure a series of incursions by foreign invaders, who have forced their way through the defiles in the North-West, and at other points where a gap was found in the immense mountain barrier which cuts off India from the rest of Asia. It is noteworthy that, notwithstanding the teeming millions of India's population, comparatively small bodies of invaders have often succeeded in overcoming all opposition and making their way through to the plains, where they have established themselves as conquerors. It is the difficult and necessary role of the Army in India to guard against a repetition of these dangers. 60,000 British troops and 150,000 Indian troops (as well as 34,000 reservists) are organised into a Field Army, into covering troops, and into a garrison for internal security, with this task amongst others constantly in mind. In peace time the duty of the covering troops, assisted by frontier levies of various kinds, is to prevent the independent tribes on the Indian side of the Afghan frontier from raiding the peaceful inhabitants of the plains below. From 1850 to 1922 there have been 72 expeditions against these tribes—an average of one a year. Behind and beyond this belt of unorganised territory lies the direction from which, throughout the ages, the danger to India's territorial integrity has come—a quarter, we may observe, occupied by States who are not members of the League of Nations. The question raised, and naturally raised, by Indian political leaders, is whether the enormous cost of the Army in India is justified (one British soldier is estimated to cost between three and four times as much as an Indian soldier), and whether alike on grounds of economy and of Indian advancement the British element in the Army, or at any rate the command by British officers of units composed of an Indian rank and file, should not be materially reduced. We have something to say on this subject below, but for the moment we are only concerned to emphasise the importance of India's problem of external defence, whoever deals with it. The outstanding fact is that the urgency and extent of the problem of military defence in India are without parallel elsewhere in the Empire, and constitute a difficulty in developing self-government which never arose in any comparable degree in the case of the self-governing Dominions.

### Provision for Internal Security.

115. But there is a second consideration which also makes the case of India unique. The Army in India is not only provided and organised to ensure against external dangers of a wholly exceptional character: it is also distributed and habitually used throughout India for the purpose of maintaining or restoring internal peace. In all countries the soldier when in barracks may be regarded as available in the last resort to deal with domestic disturbances with which the policeman cannot cope, but in Britain and elsewhere in the Empire this is little more than a theoretical consideration. The military is not normally employed in this way, and certainly is not organised for this purpose. But the case of India is entirely different. Troops are employed many times a year to prevent internal disorder and, if necessary, to quell it. Police forces, admirably organised as they are, cannot be expected in all cases to cope with the sudden and violent outburst of a mob driven frantic by religious frenzy. It is, therefore, well understood in India both by the police and by the military—and, what is even more to the point, by the public at large—that the soldiers may have to be sent for. We have been told that this use of the Army for the purpose of maintaining or restoring internal order was increasing rather than diminishing, and that on these occasions the practically universal request was for British troops. The proportion of British to Indian troops allotted to this duty has in fact risen in the last quarter of a century. The reason of course is that the British soldier is a neutral, and is under no suspicion of favouring Hindus against Muhammadans, or Muhammadans against Hindus.\* India is a country in which the wildest and most improbable stories of outrage or insult spread with amazing rapidity and are widely believed, and inasmuch as the vast majority of the disturbances which call for the intervention of the military have a communal or religious complexion, it is natural and inevitable that the intervention which is most likely to be authoritative should be that which has no bias, real or suspected, to either side. It is a striking fact in this connection that, while in the regular units of the Army in India as a whole British soldiers are in a minority of about 1 to 2½, in the troops allotted for internal security the preponderance is reversed, and for this purpose a majority of British troops is employed—in the troops earmarked for internal security the proportion is about eight British to seven Indian soldiers. When, therefore, one contemplates a future for India in which, in place of the existing Army organisation, the country is defended and policed by exclusively Indian units, just as Canada relies on Canadian troops and Ireland on Irish troops, it is essential to realise and

\* For example, in connection with the very serious riots which broke out in Bombay in the spring of 1920, a British battalion was brought up from Poona, and there can be no doubt that its appearance contributed materially to relieving a situation which had become highly charged with communal feeling.

bear in mind the dimensions and character of the Indian problem of internal order and the part which the British soldier at present plays (to the general satisfaction of the countryside) in supporting peaceful government. It will of course be understood that the formations which go to make up the field army in war are stationed in various parts of India in peace time, and the units which for the time being constitute these formations are consequently available for internal security purposes. In the event of mobilisation, these units in their respective formations would be moved to the front. The limiting factor, therefore, in determining the numbers retained for internal security is the minimum that would be needed for this purpose throughout India when the rest of the troops are assembled elsewhere for dealing with external danger.

#### Sources of Recruitment.

116. To these two features, which distinguish the case of India from that of any of the self-governing Dominions, viz (1) the necessity of being adequately organised and in sufficient military strength to deal with a danger of the first order of magnitude on her frontiers, and (2) the need for large bodies of troops to support internal order, whose neutrality in communal conflict may be not only assured, but generally recognised, must be added a third. In contrast with the self-governing Dominions, and indeed in contrast with almost the whole of the rest of the world, India presents to the observer an astonishing admixture not only of competing religions and rival races, but of races of widely different military capacity. Broadly speaking, one may say that those races which furnish the best sepoys are emphatically not those which exhibit the greatest accomplishments of mind in an examination. The Indian intellectual has, as a rule, no personal longing for an arm career. The comparison between India and Europe less Russia may be useful to convey an impression of size and density of population, but in any military estimate the comparison ends there. The contrast between areas and races in India that take to soldiering, and those that do not, has no counterpart in Europe. Whereas the most virile of the so-called martial races provide fine fighting material, other communities and areas in India do not furnish a single man for the regular Army. The Punjab supplies 54 per cent. of the total combatant troops in the Indian Army and, if the 19,000 Gurkhas recruited from the independent State of Nepal are excluded, the Punjab contingent amounts to 62 per cent. of the whole Indian Army. On the opposite page is a map showing the numbers of combatants in the Indian Army drawn from the various parts of India and from Nepal.

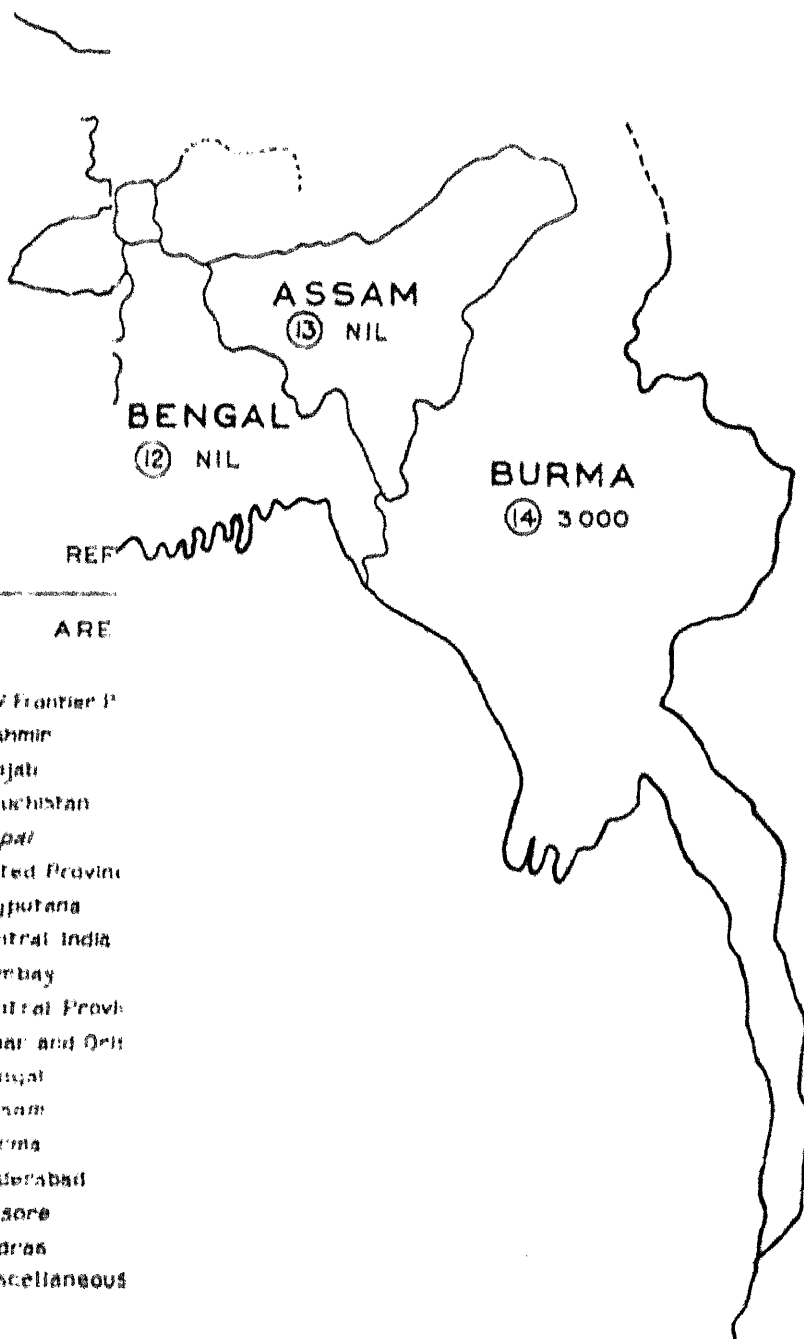
We are aware of the suggestion, which is sometimes put forward, that this contrast does not represent so much a difference in military quality as a deliberate policy adopted by the Army

# Sketch Map of India

Scale in Miles  
100 50 0 100 200

Proximate numbers (combatants--excluding  
serving in the Indian Army from the various parts  
of Nepal.

1929.





authorities for some sinister purpose. The simplest and shortest answer is furnished by the figures of recruitment from India during the Great War, when it cannot be suggested that any discouragement was offered to recruitment in any area. Bengal, with a population of 45 millions, provided 7,000 combatant recruits; the Punjab, with a population of 20 millions, provided 349,000 such recruits. The Punjab and the United Provinces between them provided three-fourths of the total number of combatant recruits raised throughout British India.\*

The plain fact is that the formation of an Indian national Army drawn from India as a whole, in which every member will recognise the rest as his comrades, in which Indian officers will lead men who may be of different races, and in which public opinion will have general confidence, is a task of the greatest possible difficulty. Strenuous efforts are being made by many Indian politicians to develop a more general sense of citizenship, and these efforts have the sympathy of all who sincerely desire to see the growth of Indian unity. The Army authorities are taking their share in the work of reducing the disparity which is no doubt due to economic and climatic considerations, and to the unseen but potent influences of tradition and of race. Cadet corps in the various universities are paid for out of Army funds. In 1923 the Territorial Forces Act was passed, and 23 Territorial units (including four urban battalions) have been formed in all parts of India, in which the selection is not limited to the classes recruited in the regular Army. But the change

\* The following extract from "India's Contribution to the Great War," published by authority of the Government of India, Calcutta, 1923, illustrates the share each province took in obtaining combatant and non-combatant recruits up to the Armistice :—

Province.	Combatant recruits enlisted.	Non- Combatant recruits enlisted.	Total.
Madras ... ..	51,223	41,117	92,340
Bombay ... ..	41,272	30,211	71,483
Bengal ... ..	7,117	51,935	59,052
United Provinces ... ..	163,578	117,565	281,143
Punjab ... ..	349,688	97,288	446,976
North-West Frontier Province ... ..	32,181	13,050	45,231
Baluchistan ... ..	1,761	327	2,088
Burma ... ..	14,094	4,579	18,673
Bihar and Orissa ... ..	8,576	32,976	41,552
Central Provinces ... ..	5,376	9,631	15,007
Assam ... ..	942	14,182	15,124
Ajmer-Merwara ... ..	7,341	1,632	8,973
Total ... ..	683,149	414,493	1,097,642

In addition, a total of 58,904 recruits were obtained from Nepal.